THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

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MACAULAY'S

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.

ESSAYS.

FRAGMENTS OF A ROMAN TALE.

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, June*, 1823.)

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It was an hour after noon. Ligarius was returning from the Campus Martius. He strolled through one of the streets which led to the Forum, settling his gown, and calculating the odds on the gladiators who were to fence at the approaching Saturnalia. While thus occupied, he overtook Flaminius, who, with a heavy step and melancholy face, was sauntering in the same direction. The light-hearted young man plucked him by the sleeve.

"Good-day, Flaminius. Are you to be of Catiline's party this evening?"

"Not I."

"Why so? Your little Tarentine girl will break her heart."

"No matter. Catiline has the best cooks and the finest wine in Rome. There are charming women at his parties. But the twelve-line board and the dice-box pay for all. The Gods confound me if I did not lose two millions of sesterces last night. My villa at Tibur, and all the statues that my father the prætor brought from Ephesus, must go to the auctioneer. That is a high price, you will acknowledge, even for Phœnicopters, Chian, and Callinice."

"High indeed, by Pollux."

"And that is not the worst. I saw several of the leading senators this morning. Strange things are whispered in the higher political circles."

"The Gods confound the political circles. I have hated the name of politician ever since Sylla's proscription, when I was within a moment of having my throat cut by a politician, who took me for another politician. While there is a cask of Falernian in Campania, or a girl in the Suburra, I shall be too well employed to think on the subject."

"You will do well," said Flaminius gravely, "to bestow some little consideration upon it at present. Otherwise, I fear, you will soon renew your acquaintance with politicians, in a manner quite as unpleasant as that to which you allude."

"Averting Gods! what do you mean?"

"I will tell you. There are rumors of conspiracy. The order of things established by Lucius Sylla has excited the disgust of the people, and of a large party of the nobles. Some violent convulsion is expected."

"What is that to me? I suppose that they will hardly proscribe the vintners and gladiators, or pass a law compelling every citizen to take a wife."

"You do not understand. Catiline is supposed to be the author of the revolutionary schemes. You must have heard bold opinions at his table repeatedly."

"I never listen to any opinions upon such subjects, bold or timid."

"Look to it. Your name has been mentioned."

"Mine! good Gods! I call heaven to witness that I never so much as mentioned Senate, Consul, or Comitia, in Catiline's house."

"Nobody suspects you of any participation in the inmost counsels of the party. But our great men surmise that you are among those whom he has bribed so high with beauty, or entangled so deeply in distress, that they are no longer their own masters. I shall never set foot within his threshold again. I have been solemnly warned by men who understand public affairs; and I advise you to be cautious."

The friends had now turned into the Forum, which was thronged with the gay and elegant youth of Rome. "I can tell you more," continued Flaminius; "somebody was remarking to the Consul yesterday how loosely a certain acquaintance of ours tied his girdle. 'Let him look to himself,' said Cicero, 'or the state may find a tighter girdle for his neck.'"

"Good Gods! who is it? You cannot surely mean—"

"There he is."

Flaminius pointed to a man who was pacing up and down the Forum at a distance from them. He was in the prime of manhood. His personal advantages were extremely striking, and were displayed with an extravagant but not ungraceful foppery. His gown waved in loose folds; his long dark curls were dressed with exquisite art, and shone and steamed with odors; his step and gesture exhibited an elegant and commanding figure in every posture of polite languor. But his countenance formed a singular contrast to the general appearance of his person. The high and imperial brow, the keen aquiline features, the compressed mouth, the penetrating eye, indicated the highest degree of ability and decision. He seemed absorbed in intense meditation. With eyes fixed on the ground, and lips working in thought, he sauntered round the area, apparently unconscious how many of the young gallants of Rome were envying the taste of his dress, and the ease of his fashionable stagger.

"Good Heaven!" said Ligarius, "Caius Cæsar is as unlikely to be in a plot as I am."

"Not at all."

"He does nothing but game, feast, intrigue, read Greek, and write verses."

"You know nothing of Cæsar. Though he rarely addresses the Senate, he is considered as the finest speaker there, after the Consul. His influence with the multitude is immense. He will serve his rivals in public life as he served me last night at Catiline's. We were playing at the twelve lines.*—Immense stakes. He laughed all the time, chatted with Valeria over his shoulder, kissed her hand between every two moves, and scarcely looked at the board. I thought that I had him. All at once I found my counters driven into the corner. Not a piece to move, by Hercules. It cost me two millions of Sesterces. All the Gods and Goddesses confound him for it!"

"As to Valeria," said Ligarius, "I forgot to ask whether you have heard the news."

"Not a word. What?"

"I was told at the baths to-day that Cæsar escorted the

* *Duodecim scripta*, a game of mixed chance and skill, which seems to have been very fashionable in the higher circles of Rome. The famous lawyer Mucius was renowned for his skill in it.—(*Cic. Orat.* i. 50.)

lady home. Unfortunately old Quintus Lutatius had come back from his villa in Campania, in a whim of jealousy. He was not expected for three days. There was a fine tumult. The old fool called for his sword and his slaves, cursed his wife, and swore that he would cut Cæsar's throat."

"And Cæsar?"

"He laughed, quoted Anacreon, trussed his gown round his left arm, closed with Quintus, flung him down, twisted his sword out of his hand, burst through the attendants, ran a freed-man through the shoulder, and was in the street in an instant."

"Well done! Here he comes. Good-day, Caius."

Cæsar lifted his head at the salutation. His air of deep abstraction vanished; and he extended a hand to each of the friends.

"How are you after your last night's exploit?"

"As well as possible," said Cæsar laughing.

"In truth we should rather ask how Quintus Lutatius is."

"He, I understand, is as well as can be expected of a man with a faithless spouse and broken head. His freed-man is most seriously hurt. Poor fellow! he shall have half of whatever I win to-night. Flaminius, you shall have your revenge at Catiline's."

"You are very kind. I do not intend to be at Catiline's till I wish to part with my town-house. My villa is gone already."

"Not at Catiline's, base spirit! You are not of his mind, my gallant Ligarius. Dice, Chian, and the loveliest Greek singing-girl that was ever seen. Think of that, Ligarius. By Venus, she almost made me adore her, by telling me that I talked Greek with the most Attic accent that she had heard in Italy."

"I doubt she will not say the same of me," replied Ligarius. "I am just as able to decipher an obelisk as to read a line of Homer."

"You barbarous Scythian, who had the care of your education?"

"An old fool,—a Greek pedant,—a Stoic. He told me that pain was no evil, and flogged me as if he thought so. At last one day, in the middle of a lecture, I set fire to his enormous filthy beard, singed his face, and sent him roaring out of the house. There ended my studies. From that time to this I have had as little to do with Greece as the

wine that your poor old friend Lutatius calls his delicious Samian."

"Well done, Ligarius. I hate a Stoic. I wish Marcus Cato had a beard that you might singe it for him. The fool talked his two hours in the Senate yesterday, without changing a muscle of his face. He looked as savage and as motionless as the mask in which Roscius acted Alecto. I detest every thing connected with him."

"Except his sister, Servilia."

"True. She is a lovely woman."

"They say that you have told her so, Caius."

"So I have."

"And that she was not angry."

"What woman is?"

"Ay,—but they say—"

"No matter what they say. Common fame lies like a Greek rhetorician. You might know so much, Ligarius, without reading the philosophers. But come, I will introduce you to little dark-eyed Zoe."

"I tell you I can speak no Greek."

"More shame for you. It is high time that you should begin. You will never have such a charming instructress. Of what was your father thinking when he sent for an old Stoic with a long beard to teach you? There is no language-mistress like a handsome woman. When I was at Athens, I learnt more Greek from a pretty flower-girl in the Peiræus than from all the Portico and the Academy. She was no Stoic, Heaven knows. But come along to Zoe. I will be your interpreter. Woo her in honest Latin, and I will turn it into elegant Greek between the throws of dice. I can make love and mind my game at once, as Flaminius can tell you."

"Well, then, to be plain, Cæsar, Flaminius has been talking to me about plots, and suspicions, and politicians. I never plagued myself with such things since Sylla's and Marius's days; and then I never could see much difference between the parties. All that I am sure of is, that those who meddle with such affairs are generally stabbed or strangled. And, though I like Greek wine and handsome women, I do not wish to risk my neck for them. Now, tell me as a friend, Caius;—is there no danger?"

"Danger!" repeated Cæsar, with a short, fierce, disdainful laugh: "what danger do you apprehend?"

"That you should best know," said Flaminius; "you

are far more intimate with Catiline than I. But I advise you to be cautious. The leading men entertain strong suspicions."

Cæsar drew up his figure from its ordinary state of graceful relaxation into an attitude of commanding dignity, and replied in a voice of which the deep and impassioned melody formed a strange contrast to the humorous and affected tone of his ordinary conversation. "Let them suspect. They suspect because they know what they have deserved. What have they done for Rome?—What for mankind?—Ask the citizens. Ask the provinces. Have they had any other object than to perpetuate their own exclusive power, and to keep us under the yoke of an oligarchical tyranny, which unites in itself the worst evils of every other system, and combines more than Athenian turbulence with more than Persian despotism?"

"Good Gods! Cæsar. It is not safe for you to speak, or for us to listen to, such things, at such a crisis."

"Judge for yourselves what you will hear. I will judge for myself what I will speak. I was not twenty years old, when I defied Lucius Sylla, surrounded by the spears of legionaries and the daggers of assassins. Do you suppose that I stand in awe of his paltry successors, who have inherited a power which they never could have acquired; who would imitate his proscriptions, though they have never equalled his conquests?"

"Pompey is almost as little to be trifled with as Sylla. I heard a consular senator say that, in consequence of the present alarming state of affairs, he would probably be recalled from the command assigned to him by the Manilian law."

"Let him come,—the pupil of Sylla's butcheries,—the gleaner of Lucullus's trophies,—the thief-taker of the Senate."

"For heaven's sake, Caius!—if you knew what the Consul said—"

"Something about himself, no doubt. Pity that such talents should be coupled with such cowardice and coxcombry. He is the finest speaker living,—infinitely superior to what Hortensius was, in his best days;—a charming companion, except when he tells over for the twentieth time all the jokes that he made at Verres's trial. But he is the despicable tool of a despicable party."

"Your language, Caius, convinces me that the reports

which have been circulated are not without foundation. I will venture to prophesy that within a few months the republic will pass through a whole Odyssey of strange adventures."

"I believe so; an Odyssey of which Pompey will be the Polyphemus, and Cicero the Siren. I would have the state imitate Ulysses: show no mercy to the former; but contrive, if it can be done, to listen to the enchanting voice of the other, without being seduced by it to destruction."

"But whom can your party produce as rivals to these two famous leaders?"

"Time will show. I would hope that there may arise a man, whose genius to conquer, to conciliate, and to govern, may unite in one cause an oppressed and divided people;—may do all that Sylla should have done, and exhibit the magnificent spectacle of a great nation directed by a great mind."

"And where is such a man to be found?"

"Perhaps where you would least expect to find him. Perhaps he may be one whose powers have hitherto been concealed in domestic or literary retirement. Perhaps he may be one, who, while waiting for some adequate excitement, for some worthy opportunity, squanders on trifles a genius before which may yet be humbled the sword of Pompey and the gown of Cicero. Perhaps he may now be disputing with a sophist; perhaps prattling with a mistress; perhaps—" and, as he spoke, he turned away, and resumed his lounge, "strolling in the Forum."

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It was almost midnight. The party had separated. Catiline and Cethegus were still conferring in the supper-room, which was, as usual, the highest apartment of the house. It formed a cupola, from which windows opened on the flat roof that surrounded it. To this terrace Zoe had retired. With eyes dimmed with fond and melancholy tears, she leaned over the balustrade, to catch the last glimpse of the departing form of Cæsar, as it grew more and more indistinct in the moonlight. Had he any thought of her? Any love for her? He, the favorite of the high-born beauties of Rome, the most eloquent of its nobles? It could not be. His voice had, indeed, been touchingly soft whenever he addressed her. There had been a fascinating tenderness even in the vivacity of his look and conversation. But such were always the

manners of Cæsar towards women. He had wreathed a sprig of myrtle in her hair as she was singing. She took it from her dark ringlets, and kissed it, and wept over it, and thought of the sweet legends of her own dear Greece,—of youths and girls, who, pining away in hopeless love, had been transformed into flowers by the compassion of the gods; and she wished to become a flower, which Cæsar might sometimes touch, though he should touch it only to weave a crown for some prouder and happier mistress.

She was roused from her musings by the loud step and voice of Cethegus, who was pacing furiously up and down the supper-room.

"May all the gods confound me, if Cæsar be not the deepest traitor, or the most miserable idiot, that ever intermeddled with a plot!"

Zoe shuddered. She drew nearer to the window. She stood concealed from observation by the curtain of fine network which hung over the aperture, to exclude the annoying insects of the climate.

"And you, too!" continued Cethegus, turning fiercely on his accomplice; "you to take his part against me!—you, who proposed the scheme yourself!"

"My dear Caius Cethegus, you will not understand me. I proposed the scheme; and I will join in executing it. But policy is as necessary to our plans as boldness. I did not wish to startle Cæsar—to lose his co-operation—perhaps to send him off with an information against us to Cicero and Catulus. He was so indignant at your suggestion, that all my dissimulation was scarcely sufficient to prevent a total rupture."

"Indignant! The gods confound him!—He prated about humanity, and generosity, and moderation. By Hercules, I have not heard such a lecture since I was with Xenocharès at Rhodes."

"Cæsar is made up of inconsistences. He has boundless ambition, unquestioned courage, admirable sagacity. Yet I have frequently observed in him a womanish weakness at the sight of pain. I remember that once one of his slaves was taken ill while carrying his litter. He alighted, put the fellow in his place, and walked home in a fall of snow. I wonder that you could be so ill-advised as to talk to him of massacre, and pillage, and conflagration. You might have foreseen that such propositions would disgust a man of his temper."

"I do not know. I have not your self-command, Lucius. I hate such conspirators. What is the use of them? We must have blood—blood,—hacking and tearing work—bloody work!"

"Do not grind your teeth, my dear Caius; and lay down the carving-knife. By Hercules, you have cut up all the stuffing of the couch."

"No matter; we shall have couches enough soon,—and down to stuff them with,—and purple to cover them,—and pretty women to loll on them,—unless this fool, and such as he, spoil our plans. I had something else to say. The essenced fop wishes to seduce Zoe from me."

"Impossible! You misconstrue the ordinary gallantries which he is in the habit of paying to every handsome face."

"Curse on his ordinary gallantries, and his verses, and his compliments, and his sprigs of myrtle! If Cæsar should dare—by Hercules, I will tear him to pieces in the middle of the Forum."

"Trust his destruction to me. We must use his talents and influence—thrust him upon every danger—make him our instrument while we are contending—our peace-offering to the Senate if we fail—our first victim if we succeed."

"Hark! what noise was that?"

"Somebody in the terrace!—lend me your dagger."

Catiline rushed to the window. Zoe was standing in the shade. He stepped out. She darted into the room—passed like a flash of lightning by the startled Cethegus—flew down the stairs—through the court—through the vestibule—through the street. Steps, voices, lights, came fast and confusedly behind her;—but with the speed of love and terror she gained upon her pursuers. She fled through the wilderness of unknown and dusky streets, till she found herself, breathless and exhausted, in the midst of a crowd of gallants, who, with chaplets on their heads, and torches in their hands, were reeling from the portico of a stately mansion.

The foremost of the throng was a youth whose slender figure and beautiful countenance seemed hardly consistent with his sex. But the feminine delicacy of his features rendered more frightful the mingled sensuality and ferocity of their expression. The libertine audacity of his stare, and the grotesque foppery of his apparel, seemed to indicate at least a partial insanity. Flinging one arm round Zoe, and tearing away her veil with the other, he disclosed to the

gaze of his thronging companions the regular features and large dark eyes which characterize Athenian beauty.

"Clodius has all the luck to-night," cried Ligarius.

"Not so, by Hercules," said Marcus Cœlius; "the girl is fairly our common prize: we will fling dice for her. The Venus* throw, as it ought to do, shall decide."

"Let me go—let me go, for Heaven's sake," cried Zoe, struggling with Clodius.

"What a charming Greek accent she has. Come into the house, my little Athenian nightingale."

"Oh! what will become of me? If you have mothers—if you have sisters—"

"Clodius has a sister," muttered Ligarius, "or he is much belied."

"By Heaven, she is weeping," said Clodius.

"If she were not evidently a Greek," said Cœlius, "I should take her for a vestal virgin."

"And if she were a vestal virgin," cried Clodius fiercely, "it should not deter me. This way;—no struggling—no screaming."

"Struggling! screaming!" exclaimed a gay and commanding voice; "You are making very ungentle love, Clodius."

The whole party started. Cæsar had mingled with them unperceived.

The sound of his voice thrilled through the very heart of Zoe. With a convulsive effort she burst from the grasp of her insolent admirer, flung herself at the feet of Cæsar, and clasped his knees. The moon shone full on her agitated and imploring face: her lips moved; but she uttered no sound. He gazed at her for an instant—raised her—clasped her to his bosom. "Fear nothing, my sweet Zoe." Then, with folded arms, and a smile of placid defiance, he placed himself between her and Clodius.

Clodius staggered forward, flushed with wine and rage, and uttering alternately a curse and a hiccup.

"By Pollux, this passes a jest. Cæsar, how dare you insult me thus?"

"A jest! I am as serious as a Jew on the Sabbath. Insult you! For such a pair of eyes I would insult the whole consular bench, or I should be as insensible as King Psammis's mummy"

* Venus was the Roman term for the highest throw on the dice.

"Good Gods, Cæsar!" said Marcus Cœlius, interposing; "you cannot think it worth while to get into a brawl for a little Greek girl!"

"Why not? The Greek girls have used me as well as those of Rome. Besides, the whole reputation of my gallantry is at stake. Give up such a lovely woman to that drunken boy! My hereafter would be gone forever. No more perfumed tablets, full of vows and raptures. No more toying with fingers at the Circus. No more evening walks along the Tiber. No more hiding in chests, or jumping from windows. I, the favored suitor of half the white stoles in Rome, could never again aspire above a freedwoman. You a man of gallantry, and think of such a thing! For shame, my dear Cœlius! Do not let Clodia hear of it."

While Cæsar spoke he had been engaged in keeping Clodius at arm's length. The rage of the frantic libertine increased as the struggle continued. "Stand back, as you value your life," he cried; "I will pass."

"Not this way, sweet Clodius. I have too much regard for you to suffer you to make love at such disadvantage. You smell too much of Falernian at present. Would you stifle your mistress? By Hercules, you are fit to kiss nobody now, except old Piso, when he is tumbling home in the morning from the vintners."*

Clodius plunged his hand into his bosom, and drew a little dagger, the faithful companion of many desperate adventures.

"Oh, Gods! he will be murdered!" cried Zoe.

The whole throng of revellers was in agitation. The street fluctuated with torches and lifted hands. It was but for a moment. Cæsar watched with a steady eye the descending hand of Clodius, arrested the blow, seized his antagonist by the throat, and flung him against one of the pillars of the portico with such violence that he rolled, stunned and senseless, on the ground.

"He is killed," cried several voices.

"Fair self-defence, by Hercules!" said Marcus Cœlius. "Bear witness, you all saw him draw his dagger."

"He is not dead—he breathes," said Ligarius. "Carry him into the house; he is dreadfully bruised."

The rest of the party retired with Clodius. Cœlius turned to Cæsar.

* Cic. in Pis.

"By all the Gods, Caius! you have won your lady fairly. A splendid victory! You deserve triumph."

"What a madman Clodius has become!"

"Intolerable. But come and sup with me on the Nones. You have no objection to meet the Consul?"

"Cicero? None at all. We need not talk politics. Our old dispute about Plato and Epicurus will furnish us with plenty of conversation. So reckon upon me, my dear Marcus, and farewell."

Cæsar and Zoe turned away. As soon as they were beyond hearing, she began in great agitation:—

"Cæsar, you are in danger. I know all. I overheard Catiline and Cethegus. You are engaged in a project which must lead to certain destruction."

"My beautiful Zoe, I live only for glory and pleasure. For these I have never hesitated to hazard an existence which they alone render valuable to me. In the present case, I can assure you that our scheme presents the fairest hopes of success."

"So much the worse. You do not know—you do not understand me. I speak not of open peril, but of secret treachery. Catiline hates you;—Cethegus hates you;—your destruction is resolved. If you survive the contest, you perish in the first hour of victory. They detest you for your moderation;—they are eager for blood and plunder. I have risked my life to bring you this warning; but that is of little moment. Farewell!—Be happy."

Cæsar stopped her. "Do you fly from my thanks, dear Zoe?"

"I wish not for your thanks, but for your safety;—I desire not to defraud Valeria or Servilia of one caress, extorted from gratitude or pity. Be my feelings what they may, I have learnt in a fearful school to endure and to suppress them. I have been taught to abase a proud spirit to the claps and hisses of the vulgar;—to smile on suitors who united the insults of a despicable pride to the endearments of a loathsome fondness;—to affect sprightliness with an aching head, and eyes from which tears were ready to gush;—to feign love with curses on my lips, and madness in my brain. Who feels for me any esteem,—any tenderness? Who will shed a tear over the nameless grave which will soon shelter from cruelty and scorn the broken heart of the poor Athenian girl? But you, who alone have addressed her in her degradation with a voice of kindness and respect,

farewell. Sometimes think of me,—not with sorrow;—no; I could bear your ingratitude, but not your distress. Yet, if it will not pain you too much, in distant days, when your lofty hopes and destinies are accomplished,—on the evening of some mighty victory,—in the chariot of some magnificent triumph,—think on one who loved you with that exceeding love which only the miserable can feel. Think that, wherever her exhausted frame may have sunk beneath the sensibilities of a tortured spirit,—in whatever hovel or whatever vault she may have closed her eyes,—whatever strange scenes of horror and pollution may have surrounded her dying bed, your shape was the last that swam before her sight—your voice the last sound that was ringing in her ears. Yet turn your face to me, Cæsar. Let me carry away one last look of those features, and then—" He turned round. He looked at her. He hid his face on her bosom, and burst into tears. With sobs long and loud, and convulsive as those of a terrified child, he poured forth on her bosom the tribute of impetuous and uncontrollable emotion. He raised his head; but he in vain struggled to restore composure to the brow which had confronted the frown of Sylla, and the lips which had rivalled the eloquence of Cicero. He several times attempted to speak, but in vain; and his voice still faltered with tenderness, when, after a pause of several minutes, he thus addressed her:

"My own dear Zoe, your love has been bestowed on one who, if he cannot merit, can at least appreciate and adore you. Beings of similar loveliness, and similar devotedness of affection, mingled, in all my boyish dreams of greatness, with visions of curule chairs and ivory cars, marshalled legions and laurelled fasces. Such I have endeavored to find in the world; and, in their stead, I have met with selfishness, with vanity, with frivolity, with falsehood. The life which you have preserved is a boon less valuable than the affection—"

"Oh! Cæsar," interrupted the blushing Zoe, "think only on your own security at present. If you feel as you speak,—but you are only mocking me,—or perhaps your compassion—"

"By Heaven!—by every oath that is binding—"

"Alas! alas! Cæsar, were not all the same oaths sworn yesterday to Valeria? But I will trust you, at least so far as to partake your present dangers. Flight may be necessary:—form your plans. Be they what they may, there is

one who, in exile, in poverty, in peril, asks only to wander, to beg, to die with you."

"My Zoe, I do not anticipate any such necessity. To renounce the conspiracy without renouncing the principles on which it was originally undertaken—to elude the vengeance of the Senate without losing the confidence of the people—is, indeed, an arduous, but not an impossible, task. I owe it to myself and to my country to make the attempt. There is still ample time for consideration. At present I am too happy in love to think of ambition or danger."

They had reached the door of a stately palace. Cæsar struck it It was instantly opened by a slave. Zoe found herself in a magnificent hall, surrounded by pillars of green marble, between which were ranged the statues of the long line of Julian nobles.

"Call Endymion," said Cæsar.

The confidential freed-man made his appearance, not without a slight smile, which his patron's good-nature emboldened him to hazard, at perceiving the beautiful Athenian.

"Arm my slaves, Endymion; there are reasons for precaution. Let them relieve each other on guard during the night. Zoe, my love, my preserver, why are your cheeks so pale? Let me kiss some bloom into them. How you tremble! Endymion, a flask of Samian and some fruit. Bring them to my apartments. This way, my sweet Zoe."

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ON THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE.

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, June*, 1823.)

THIS is the age of societies. There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books, or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital, or beggars to the treadmill; for giving plate to the rich or blankets to the poor. To be the most absurd institution among so many institutions is no small distinction; it seems, however, to belong indisputably to the Royal Society of Literature. At the first establishment of that ridiculous academy, every sensible man predicted that, in spite of regal patronage and episcopal management, it

would do nothing, or do harm. And it will scarcely be denied that those expectations have hitherto been fulfilled.

I do not attack the founders of the association. Their characters are respectable; their motives, I am willing to believe, were laudable. But I feel, and it is the duty of every literary man to feel, a strong jealousy of their proceedings. Their society can be innocent only while it continues to be despicable. Should they ever possess the power to encourage merit, they must also possess the power to depress it. Which power will be more frequently exercised, let every one who has studied literary history, let every one who has studied human nature, declare.

Envy and faction insinuate themselves into all communities. They often disturb the peace, and pervert the decisions, of benevolent and scientific associations. But it is in literary academies that they exert the most extensive and pernicious influence. In the first place, the principles of literary criticism, though equally fixed with those on which the chemist and the surgeon proceed, are by no means equally recognized. Men are rarely able to assign a reason for their approbation or dislike on questions of taste; and therefore they willingly submit to any guide who boldly asserts his claim to superior discernment. It is more difficult to ascertain and establish the merits of a poem than the powers of a machine or the benefits of a new remedy. Hence it is in literature, that quackery is most easily puffed, and excellence most easily decried.

In some degree this argument applies to academies of the fine arts; and it is fully confirmed by all that I have ever heard of that institution which annually disfigures the walls of Somerset-House with an acre of spoiled canvass. But a literary tribunal is incomparably more dangerous. Other societies, at least, have no tendency to call forth any opinions on those subjects which most agitate and inflame the minds of men. The skeptic and the zealot, the revolutionist and the placeman, meet on common ground in a gallery of paintings or a laboratory of science. They can praise or censure without reference to the differences which exist between them. In a literary body this can never be the case. Literature is, and always must be, inseparably blended with politics and theology; it is the great engine which moves the feelings of a people on the most momentous questions. It is, therefore, impossible that any society can be formed so impartial as to consider the literary character

of an individual abstracted from the opinions which his writings inculcate. It is not to be hoped, perhaps it is not to be wished, that the feelings of the man should be so completely forgotten in the duties of the academician. The consequences are evident. The honors and censures of this Star-chamber of the Muses will be awarded according to the prejudices of the particular sect or faction which may at the time predominate. Whigs would canvass against a Southey, Tories against a Byron. Those who might at first protest against such conduct as unjust would soon adopt it on the plea of retaliation; and the general good of literature, for which the society was professedly instituted, would be forgotten in the stronger claims of political and religious partiality.

Yet even this is not the worst. Should the institution ever acquire any influence, it will afford most pernicious facilities to every malignant coward who may desire to blast a reputation which he envies. It will furnish a secure ambuscade, behind which the Maroons of literature may take a certain and deadly aim. The editorial *we* has often been fatal to rising genius; though all the world knows it is only a form of speech, very often employed by a single needy blockhead. The academic *we* would have a far greater and more ruinous influence. Numbers, while they increased the effect, would diminish the shame, of injustice. The advantages of an open and those of an anonymous attack would be combined; and the authority of avowal would be united to the security of concealment. The serpents in Virgil, after they had destroyed Laocoön, found an asylum from the vengeance of the enraged people behind the shield of the statue of Minerva. And, in the same manner, every thing that is grovelling and venomous, every thing that can hiss, and every thing that can sting, would take sanctuary in the recesses of this new temple of wisdom.

The French academy was, of all such associations, the most widely and the most justly celebrated. It was founded by the greatest of ministers; it was patronized by successive kings; it numbered in its lists most of the eminent French writers. Yet, what benefit has literature derived from its labors? What is its history but an uninterrupted record of servile compliances—of paltry artifices—of deadly quarrels—of perfidious friendships? Whether governed by the Court, by the Sorbonne, or by the Philosophers, it was always equally powerful for evil, and equally impotent for

good. I might speak of the attacks by which it attempted to depress the rising fame of Corneille; I might speak of the reluctance with which it gave its tardy confirmation to the applauses which the whole civilized world had bestowed on the genius of Voltaire. I might prove by overwhelming evidence that, to the latest period of its existence, even under the superintendence of the all-accomplished D'Alembert, it continued to be a scene of the fiercest animosities and the basest intrigues. I might cite Piron's epigrams, and Marmontel's memoirs, and Montesquieu's letters. But I hasten on to another topic.

One of the modes by which our Society proposes to encourage merit is the distribution of prizes. The munificence of the king has enabled it to offer an annual premium of a hundred guineas for the best essay in prose, and another of fifty guineas for the best poem, which may be transmitted to it. This is very laughable. In the first place the judges may err. Those imperfections of human intellect to which, as the articles of the church tell us, even general councils are subject, may possibly be found even in the Royal Society of Literature. The French Academy, as I have already said, was the most illustrious assembly of the kind, and numbered among its associates men much more distinguished than ever will assemble at Mr. Hatchard's to rummage the box of the English Society. Yet this famous body gave a poetical prize, for which Voltaire was a candidate, to a fellow who wrote some verses about *the frozen and the burning pole.*

Yet, granting that the prizes were always awarded to the best composition, that composition, I say without hesitation, will always be bad. A prize poem is like a prize sheep. The object of the competitor for the agricultural premium is to produce an animal fit, not to be eaten, but to be weighed. Accordingly, he pampers his victim into morbid and unnatural fatness; and, when it is in such a state that it would be sent away in disgust from any table, he offers it to the judges. The object of the poetical candidate, in like manner, is to produce, not a good poem, but a poem of that exact degree of frigidity or bombast which may appear to his censors to be correct or sublime. Compositions thus constructed will always be worthless. The few excellences which they may contain will have an exotic aspect and flavor. In general, prize sheep are good for nothing but to make tallow candles, and prize poems are good for nothing but to light them.

The first subject proposed by the Society to the poets of England was Dartmoor. I thought that they intended a covert sarcasm at their own projects. Their institution was a literary Dartmoor scheme;—a plan for forcing into cultivation the waste lands of intellect,—for raising poetical produce, by means of bounties, from soil too meagre to have yielded any returns in the natural course of things. The plan for the cultivation of Dartmoor has, I hear, been abandoned. I hope that this may be an omen of the fate of the Society.

In truth, this seems by no means improbable. They have been offering for several years the rewards which the king placed at their disposal, and have not, as far as I can learn, been able to find in their box one composition which they have deemed worthy of publication. At least no publication has taken place. The associates may perhaps be astonished at this. But I will attempt to explain it, after the manner of ancient times, by means of an apologue.

About four hundred years after the deluge, King Gomer Chephoraod reigned in Babylon. He united all the characteristics of an excellent sovereign. He made good laws, won great battles, and white-washed long streets. He was, in consequence, idolized by his people, and panegyrized by many poets and orators. A book was then a serious undertaking. Neither paper nor any similar material had been invented. Authors were, therefore, under the necessity of inscribing their compositions on massive bricks. Some of these Babylonian records are still preserved in European museums; but the language in which they are written has never been deciphered. Gomer Chephoraod was so popular that the clay of all the plains around the Euphrates could scarcely furnish brick-kilns enough for his eulogists. It is recorded in particular that Pharonezzar, the Assyrian Pindar, published a bridge and four walls in his praise.

One day the king was going in state from his palace to the temple of Belus. During this procession it was lawful for any Babylonian to offer any petition or suggestion to his sovereign. As the chariot passed before a vintner's shop, a large company, apparently half-drunk, sallied forth into the street; and one of them thus addressed the king:

"Gomer Chephoraod, live forever! It appears to thy servants that of all the productions of the earth good wine is the best, and bad wine is the worst. Good wine makes the heart cheerful, the eyes bright, the speech ready. Bad

wine confuses the head, disorders the stomach, makes us quarrelsome at night, and sick the next morning. Now, therefore, let my lord the king take order that thy servants may drink good wine."

"And how is this to be done?" said the good-natured prince.

"Oh, king," said his monitor, "this is most easy. Let the king make a decree, and seal it with his royal signet; and let it be proclaimed that the king will give ten she-asses, and ten slaves, and ten changes of raiment, every year, unto the man who shall make ten measures of the best wine. And whosoever wishes for the she-asses, and the slaves, and the raiment, let him send the ten measures of wine to thy servants, and we will drink thereof and judge. So shall there be much good wine in Assyria."

The project pleased Gomer Chephoraod. "Be it so," said he. The people shouted. The petitioners prostrated themselves in gratitude. The same night heralds were despatched to bear the intelligence to the remotest districts of Assyria.

After a due interval the wines began to come in; and the examiners assembled to adjudge the prize. The first vessel was unsealed. Its odor was such that the judges, without tasting it, pronounced unanimous condemnation. The next was opened; it had a villainous taste of clay. The third was sour and vapid. They proceeded from one cask of execrable liquor to another, till at length, in absolute nausea, they gave up the investigation.

The next morning they all assembled at the gate of the king, with pale faces and aching heads. They owned that they could not recommend any competitor as worthy of the reward. They swore that the wine was little better than poison, and entreated permission to resign the office of deciding between such detestable potions.

"In the name of Belus, how can this have happened?" said the king.

Merolchazzar, the high-priest, muttered something about the anger of the Gods at the toleration shown to a sect of impious heretics who ate pigeons broiled, "whereas," said he, "our religion commands us to eat them roasted. Now, therefore, oh king," continued this respectable divine, "give command to thy men of war, and let them smite the disobedient people with the sword, them, and their wives, and their children, and let their houses, and their flocks,

and their herds, be given to thy servants the priests. Then shall the land yield its increase, and the fruits of the earth shall be no more blasted by the vengeance of heaven."

"Nay," said the king, "the ground lies under no general curse from heaven. The season has been singularly good. The wine which thou didst thyself drink at the banquet a few nights ago, oh venerable Merolchazzar, was of this year's vintage. Dost thou not remember how thou didst praise it? It was the same night that thou wast inspired by Belus, and didst reel to and fro, and discourse sacred mysteries. These things are too hard for me. I comprehend them not. The only wine which is bad is that which is sent to my judges. Who can expound this to us?"

The king scratched his head. Upon which all the courtiers scratched their heads.

He then ordered proclamation to be made, that a purple robe and a golden chain should be given to the man who could solve this difficulty.

An old philosopher, who had been observed to smile rather disdainfully when the prize had first been instituted, came forward and spoke thus:—

"Gomer Chephoraod, live forever! Marvel not at that which has happened. It was no miracle, but a natural event. How could it be otherwise? It is true that much good wine has been made this year. But who would send it in for thy rewards? Thou knowest Ascobaruch who hath the great vineyards in the north, and Cohahiroth who sendeth wine every year from the south over the Persian Gulf. Their wines are so delicious that ten measures thereof are sold for an hundred talents of silver. Thinkest thou that they will exchange them for thy slaves and thine asses? What would thy prize profit any who have vineyards in rich soils?"

"Who, then," said one of the judges, "are the wretches who sent us this poison?"

"Blame them not," said the sage, "seeing that you have been the authors of the evil. They are men whose lands are poor, and have never yielded them any returns equal to the prizes which the king proposed. Wherefore, knowing that the lords of the fruitful vineyards would not enter into competition with them, they planted vines, some on rocks, and some in light sandy soil, and some in deep clay. Hence their wines are bad. For no culture or reward will make barren land bear good vines. Know therefore, assuredly,

that your prizes have increased the quantity of bad but not of good wine."

There was a long silence. At length the king spoke. "Give him the purple robe and the chain of gold. Throw the wines into the Euphrates; and proclaim that the Royal Society of Wines is dissolved."

SCENES FROM "ATHENIAN REVELS."

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, January*, 1824.)

A DRAMA.

I.

Scene—*A Street in Athens.*

Enter **Callidemus** *and* **Speusippus.**

CALLIDEMUS.

So, you young reprobate! You must be a man of wit, forsooth, and a man of quality! You must spend as if you were as rich as Nicias, and prate as if you were as wise as Pericles! You must dangle after sophists and pretty women! And I must pay for all! I must sup on thyme and onions, while you are swallowing thrushes and hares! I must drink water, that you may play the cottabus* with Chian wine! I must wander about as ragged as Pauson,† that you may be as fine as Alcibiades! I must lie on bare boards, with a stone ‡ for my pillow, and a rotten mat for my coverlid, by the light of a wretched winking lamp, while you are marching in state, with as many torches as one sees at the feast of Ceres, to thunder with your hatchet § at the doors of half the Ionian ladies in Peiræus. ‖

* This game consisted in projecting wine out of cups; it was a diversion extremely fashionable at Athenian entertainments.

† Pauson was an Athenian painter, whose name was synonymous with beggary. See Aristophanes; Plutus, 602. From his poverty, I am inclined to suppose that he painted historical pictures.

‡ See Aristophanes; Plutus, 542.

§ See Theocritus; Idyll ii. 128.

‖ This was the most disreputable part of Athens. See Aristophanes; Pax, 165

SPEUSIPPUS.

Why, thou unreasonable old man! Thou most shameless of fathers!—

CALLIDEMUS.

Ungrateful wretch! dare you talk so? Are you not afraid of the thunders of Jupiter?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Jupiter thunder! nonsense! Anaxagoras says, that thunder is only an explosion produced by—

CALLIDEMUS.

He does! Would that it had fallen on his head for his pains!

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay: talk rationally.

CALLIDEMUS.

Rationally! You audacious young sophist! I will talk rationally. Do you know that I am your father? What quibble can you make upon that?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Do I know that you are my father? Let us take the question to pieces, as Melesigenes would say. First, then, we must inquire what is knowledge? Secondly, what is a father? Now, knowledge, as Socrates said the other day to Theætetus,*—

CALLIDEMUS.

Socrates! what! the ragged flat-nosed old dotard, who walks about all day barefoot, and filches cloaks, and dissects gnats, and shoes † fleas with wax?

SPEUSIPPUS.

All fiction! All trumped up by Aristophanes!

CALLIDEMUS.

By Pallas, if he is in the habit of putting shoes on his

* See Plato's Theætetus. † See Aristophanes; Nubes, 150.

fleas, he is kinder to them than to himself. But listen to me, boy; if you go on this way, you will be ruined. There is an argument for you. Go to your Socrates, and your Melesigenes, and tell them to refute that. Ruined! Do you hear?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Ruined!

CALLIDENUS.

Ay, by Jupiter! Is such a show as you make to be supported on nothing? During all the last war, I made not an obol from my farm; the Peloponnesian locusts came almost as regularly as the Pleiades;—corn burnt;—olives stripped;—fruit trees cut down;—wells stopped up;—and, just when peace came, and I hoped that all would turn out well, you must begin to spend as if you had all the mines of Thasus at command.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Now, by Neptune, who delights in horses—

CALLIDEMUS.

If Neptune delights in horses, he does not resemble me. You must ride at the Panathenæa on a horse fit for the great king: four acres of my best vines went for that folly. You must retrench, or you will have nothing to eat. Does not Anaxagoras mention, among his other discoveries, that when a man has nothing to eat he dies?

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are deceived. My friends—

CALLIDEMUS.

Oh, yes! your friends will notice you, doubtless, when you are squeezing through the crowd, on a winter's day, to warm yourself at the fire of the baths;—or when you are fighting with beggars and beggars' dogs for the scraps of a sacrifice;—or when you are glad to earn three wretched obols* by listening all day to lying speeches and crying children.

SPEUSIPPUS.

There are other means of support.

* The stipend of an Athenian juryman.

CALLIDEMUS.

What! I suppose you will wander from house to house, like that wretched buffoon Philippus,* and beg everybody who has asked a supper-party to be so kind as to feed you and laugh at you; or you will turn sycophant; you will get a bunch of grapes, or a pair of shoes, now and then, by frightening some rich coward with a mock prosecution. Well! that is a task for which your studies under the sophists may have fitted you.

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are wide of the mark.

CALLIDEMUS.

Then what, in the name of Juno, is your scheme? Do you intend to join Orestes,† and rob on the highway? Take care; beware of the eleven; ‡ beware of the hemlock. It may be very pleasant to live at other people's expense; but not very pleasant, I should think, to hear the pestle give its last bang against the mortar, when the cold dose is ready. Pah!—

SPEUSIPPUS.

Hemlock! Orestes! folly!—I aim at nobler objects. What say you to politics,—the general assembly?

CALLIDEMUS.

You an orator!—oh no! no! Cleon was worth twenty such fools as you. You have succeeded, I grant, to his impudence, for which, if there be justice in Tartarus, he is now soaking up to the eyes in his own tan-pickle. But the Paphlagonian had parts.

SPEUSIPPUS.

And you mean to imply—

CALLIDEMUS.

Not I. You are a Pericles in embryo, doubtless. Well: and when are you to make your first speech? Oh, Pallas!

* Xenophon; Convivium.

† A celebrated highwayman of Attica. See Aristophanes; Aves, 711; and in several other passages.

‡ The police officers of Athens.

SPEUSIPPUS.

I thought of speaking, the other day, on the Sicilian expedition, but Nicias * got up before me.

CALLIDEMUS.

Nicias, poor honest man, might just as well have sate still; his speaking did but little good. The loss of your oration is, doubtless, an irreparable public calamity.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Why, not so; I intend to introduce it at the next assembly; it will suit any subject.

CALLIDEMUS.

That is to say, it will suit none. But pray, if it be not too presumptuous a request, indulge me with a specimen.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Well; suppose the agora crowded;—an important subject under discussion;—an ambassador from Argos, or from the great king;—the tributes from the islands;—an impeachment;—in short, any thing you please. The crier makes proclamation.—"Any citizen above fifty years old may speak—any citizen not disqualified may speak." Then I rise:—a great murmur of curiosity while I am mounting the stand.

CALLIDEMUS.

Of curiosity! yes, and of something else too. You will infallibly be dragged down by main force, like poor Glaucon † last year.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Never fear. I shall begin in this style:

"When I consider, Athenians, the importance of our city;—when I consider the extent of its power, the wisdom of its laws, the elegance of its decorations;—when I consider by what names and by what exploits its annals are adorned;—when I think on Harmodius and Aristogiton, on Themistocles and Miltiades, on Cimon and Pericles;—when I contemplate our pre-eminence in arts and letters;—when I ob

* See Thucydides, vi. 8. † See Xenophon; Memorabilia, iii.

serve so many flourishing states and islands compelled to own the dominion, and purchase the protection, of the City of the Violet Crown *.—"

CALLIDEMUS.

I shall choke with rage. Oh, all ye gods and goddesses, what sacrilege, what perjury have I ever committed that I should be singled out from among all the citizens of Athens to be the father of this fool?

SPEUSIPPUS.

What now? By Bacchus, old man, I would not advise you to give way to such fits of passion in the streets. If Aristophanes were to see you, you would infallibly be in a comedy next spring.

CALLIDEMUS.

You have more reason to fear Aristophanes than any fool living. Oh, that he could but hear you trying to imitate the slang of Straton † and the lisp of Alcibiades! ‡ You would be an inexhaustible subject. You would console him for the loss of Cleon.

SPEUSIPPUS.

No, no. I may perhaps figure at the dramatic representations before long; but in a very different way.

CALLIDEMUS.

What do you mean?

SPEUSIPPUS.

What say you to a tragedy?

CALLIDEMUS.

A tragedy of yours?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Even so.

CALLIDEMUS.

Oh, Hercules! Oh, Bacchus! This is too much. Here

* A favorite epithet of Athens. See Aristophanes; Acharn. 637.
† See Aristophanes; Equites, 1375. ‡ See Aristophanes; Vespæ, 44.

is an universal genius; sophist,—orator,—poet. To what a three-headed monster have I given birth! a perfect Cerberus of intellect! And pray what may your piece be about? Or will your tragedy, like your speech, serve equally for any subject?

SPEUSIPPUS.

I thought of several plots;—Œdipus,—Eteocles and Polynices,—the war of Troy, the murder of Agamemnon.

CALLIDEMUS.

And what have you chosen?

SPEUSIPPUS.

You know there is a law which permits any modern poet to retouch a play of Æschylus, and bring it forward as his own composition. And, as there is an absurd prejudice, among the vulgar, in favor of his extravagant pieces, I have selected one of them, and altered it.

CALLIDEMUS.

Which of them?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Oh! that mass of barbarous absurdities, the Prometheus. But I have framed it anew upon the model of Euripides. By Bacchus, I shall make Sophocles and Agathon look about them. You would not know the play again.

CALLIDEMUS.

By Jupiter, I believe not.

SPEUSIPPUS.

I have omitted the whole of the absurd dialogue between Vulcan and Strength, at the beginning.

CALLIDEMUS.

That may be, on the whole, an improvement. The play will then open with that grand soliloquy of Prometheus, when he is chained to the rock.

"Oh! ye eternal heavens! Ye rushing winds!
Ye fountains of great streams! Ye ocean waves,
That in ten thousand sparkling dimples wreathe
Your azure smiles! All-generating earth!
All-seeing sun! On you, on you, I call." *

Well, I allow that will be striking; I did not think you capable of that idea. Why do you laugh?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Do you seriously suppose that one who has studied the plays of that great man, Euripides, would ever begin a tragedy in such a ranting style?

CALLIDEMUS.

What, does not your play open with the speech of Prometheus?

SPEUSIPPUS.

No doubt.

CALLIDEMUS.

Then what, in the name of Bacchus, do you make him say?

SPEUSIPPUS.

You shall hear; and, if it be not in the very style of Euripides, call me a fool.

CALLIDEMUS.

That is a liberty which I shall venture to take, whether it be or no. But go on.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Prometheus begins thus:

"Cœlus begat Saturn and Briareus,
Cottus and Creius and Iapetus,
Gyges and Hyperion, Phœbe, Tethys,
Thea and Rhea and Mnemosyne.
Then Saturn wedded Rhea, and begat
Pluto and Neptune, Jupiter and Juno."

CALLIDEMUS.

Very beautiful, and very natural; and, as you say, very like Euripides.

* See Æschylus; Prometheus, 88.

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are sneering. Really, father, you do not understand these things. You had not those advantages in your youth—

CALLIDEMUS.

Which I have been fool enough to let you have. No; in my early days, lying had not been dignified into a science, nor politics degraded into a trade. I wrestled, and read Homer's battles, instead of dressing my hair and reciting lectures in verse out of Euripides. But I have some notion of what a play should be; I have seen Phrynichus, and lived with Æschylus. I saw the representation of the Persians.

SPEUSIPPUS.

A wretched play; it may amuse the fools who row the triremes; but it is utterly unworthy to be read by any man of taste.

CALLIDEMUS.

If you had seen it acted;—the whole theatre frantic with joy, stamping, shouting, laughing, crying. There was Cynægeirus, the brother of Æschylus, who lost both his arms at Marathon, beating the stumps against his sides with rapture. When the crowd remarked him—But where are you going?

SPEUSIPPUS.

To sup with Alcibiades; he sails with the expedition for Sicily in a few days; this is his farewell entertainment.

CALLIDEMUS.

So much the better; I should say, so much the worse. That cursed Sicilian expedition! And you were one of the young fools* who stood clapping and shouting while he was gulling the rabble, and who drowned poor Nicias's voice with the uproar. Look to it; a day of reckoning will come. As to Alcibiades himself—

SPEUSIPPUS.

What can you say against him? His enemies themselves acknowledge his merit.

* See Thucydides, vi. 13.

CALLIDEMUS.

They acknowledge that he is clever, and handsome, and that he was crowned at the Olympic games. And what other merits do his friends claim for him? A precious assembly you will meet at his house, no doubt.

SPEUSIPPUS.

The first men in Athens, probably.

CALLIDEMUS.

Whom do you mean by the first men in Athens?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Callicles.*

CALLIDEMUS.

A sacrilegious, impious, unfeeling ruffian!

SPEUSIPPUS.

Hippomachus.

CALLIDEMUS.

A fool, who can talk of nothing but his travels through Persia and Egypt. Go, go. The gods forbid that I should detain you from such choice society.

[*Exeunt severally.*

II.

SCENE—*A Hall in the House of* ALCIBIADES.

ALCIBIADES, SPEUSIPPUS, CALLICLES, HIPPOMACHUS, CHARICLEA, *and others, seated round a table, feasting.*

ALCIBIADES.

Bring larger cups. This shall be our gayest revel. It is probably the last—for some of us at least.

SPEUSIPPUS.

At all events, it will be long before you taste such wine again, Alcibiades.

* Callicles plays a conspicuous part in the Gorgias of Plato.

CALLICLES.

Nay, there is excellent wine is Sicily. When I was there with Eurymedon's squadron, I had many a long carouse You never saw finer grapes than those of Ætna.

HIPPOMACHUS.

The Greeks do not understand the art of making wine Your Persian is the man. So rich, so fragrant, so sparkling. I will tell you what the Satrap of Caria said to me about that when I supped with him.

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, sweet Hippomachus; not a word to-night about satraps, or the great king, or the walls of Babylon, or the Pyramids, or the mummies. Chariclea, why do you look so sad?

CHARICLEA.

Can I be cheerful when you are going to leave me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

My life, my sweet soul, it is but for a short time. In a year we conquer Sicily. In another, we humble Carthage.* I will bring back such robes, such neck-laces, elephants' teeth by thousands, ay, and the elephants themselves, if you wish to see them. Nay, smile, my Chariclea, or I shall talk nonsense to no purpose.

HIPPOMACHUS.

The largest elephant that I ever saw was in the grounds of Teribazus, near Susa. I wish that I had measured him.

ALCIBIADES.

I wish that he had trod upon you. Come, come, Chariclea, we shall soon return, and then—

CHARICLEA.

Yes; then, indeed.

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, then—

* See Thucydides, vi. 90.

Then for revels ; then for dances,
Tender whispers, melting glances.
Peasants, pluck your richest fruits :
Minstrels, sound your sweetest flutes :
Come in laughing crowds to greet us,
Dark-eyed daughters of Miletus ;
Bring the myrtles, bring the dice,
Floods of Chian, hills of spice.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Whose lines are those, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

My own. Think you, because I do not shut myself up to meditate, and drink water, and eat herbs, that I cannot write verses? By Apollo, if I did not spend my days in politics, and my nights in revelry, I should have made Sophocles tremble. But now I never go beyond a little song like this, and never invoke any Muse but Chariclea. But come, Speusippus, sing. You are a professed poet. Let us have some of your verses.

SPEUSIPPUS.

My verses! How can you talk so? I a professed poet!

ALCIBIADES.

Oh, content you, sweet Speusippus. We all know your designs upon the tragic honors. Come, sing. A chorus of your new play.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay, nay—

HIPPOMACHUS.

When a guest who is asked to sing at a Persian banquet refuses—

SPEUSIPPUS.

In the name of Bacchus—

ALCIBIADES.

I am absolute. Sing.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Well, then, I will sing you a chorus, which, I think, is a tolerable imitation of Euripides.

CHARICLEA.

Of Euripides?—Not a word!

ALCIBIADES.

Why so, sweet Chariclea?

CHARICLEA.

Would you have me betray my sex? Would you have me forget his Phædras and Sthenobœas? No: if I ever suffer any lines of that woman-hater, or his imitators, to be sung in my presence, may I* sell herbs like his mother, and wear rags like his Telephus.†

ALCIBIADES.

Then, sweet Chariclea, since you have silenced Speusippus, you shall sing yourself.

CHARICLEA

What shall I sing?

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, choose for yourself.

CHARICLEA.

Then I will sing an old Ionian hymn, which is chanted every spring at the feast of Venus, near Miletus. I used to sing it in my own country when I was a child; and—Ah, Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Dear Chariclea, you shall sing something else. This distresses you.

CHARICLEA.

No: hand me the lyre:—no matter. You will hear the song to disadvantage. But if it were sung as I have heard it sung;—if this were a beautiful morning in spring,

* The mother of Euripides was a herb-woman. This was a favorite topic of Aristophanes.

† The hero of one of the lost plays of Euripides, who appears to have been brought upon the stage in the garb of a beggar. See Aristophanes; Acharn. 430, and in other places.

and if we were standing on a woody promontory, with the sea, and the white sails, and the blue Cyclades beneath us, —and the portico of a temple peeping through the trees on a huge peak above our heads,—and thousands of people, with myrtles in their hands, thronging up the winding path, their gay dresses and garlands disappearing and emerging by turns as they passed round the angles of the rock,—then perhaps—

ALCIBIADES.

Now, by Venus herself, sweet lady, where you are we shall lack neither sun, nor flowers, nor spring, nor temple, nor goddess.

CHARICLEA. (*Sings.*)

Let this sunny hour be given,
Venus, unto love and mirth:
Smiles like thine are in the heaven;
Bloom like thine is on the earth;
And the tinkling of the fountains,
And the murmurs of the sea,
And the echoes from the mountains,
Speak of youth, and hope, and thee.

By whate'er of soft expression
Thou hast taught to lovers' eyes
Faint denial, slow confession,
Glowing cheeks and stifled sighs;
By the pleasure and the pain,
By the follies and the wiles,
Pouting fondness, sweet disdain,
Happy tears and mournful smiles;

Come with music floating o'er thee;
Come with violets springing round:
Let the Graces dance before thee,
All their golden zones unbound;
Now in sport their faces hiding,
Now, with slender fingers fair,
From their laughing eyes dividing
The long curls of rose-crowned hair.

ALCIBIADES.

Sweetly sung; but mournfully, Chariclea, for which I would chide you, but that I am sad myself. More wine there. I wish to all the gods that I had fairly sailed from Athens.

CHARICLEA.

And from me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, from you, dear lady. The days which immediately precede separation are the most melancholy of our lives.

CHARICLEA.

Except those which immediately follow it.

ALCIBIADES.

No; when I cease to see you, other objects may compel my attention; but can I be near you without thinking how lovely you are, and how soon I must leave you?

HIPPOMACHUS.

Ay; travelling soon puts such thoughts out of men's heads.

CALLICLES.

A battle is the best remedy for them.

CHARICLEA.

A battle, I should think, might supply their place with others as unpleasant.

CALLICLES.

No. The preparations are rather disagreeable to a novice. But as soon as the fighting begins, by Jupiter, it is a noble time;—men trampling,—shields clashing,—spears breaking,—and the pœan roaring louder than all.

CHARICLEA.

But what if you are killed?

CALLICLES.

What indeed? You must ask Speusippus that question. He is a philosopher.

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, and the greatest of philosophers, if he can answer it.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Pythagoras is of opinion—

HIPPOMACHUS.

Pythagoras stole that and all his other opinions from Asia and Egypt. The transmigration of the soul and the vegetable diet are derived from India. I met a Brachman in Sogdiana—

CALLICLES.

All nonsense!

CHARICLEA.

What think you, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

I think that, if the doctrine be true, your spirit will be transfused into one of the doves who carry * ambrosia to the gods or verses to the mistresses of poets. Do you remember Anacreon's lines? How should you like such an office?

CHARICLEA.

If I were to be your dove, Alcibiades, and you would treat me as Anacreon treated his, and let me nestle in your breast and drink from your cup, I would submit even to carry your love-letters to other ladies.

CALLICLES.

What, in the name of Jupiter, is the use of all these speculations about death? Socrates once † lectured me upon it the best part of a day. I have hated the sight of him ever since. Such things may suit an old sophist when he is fasting; but in the midst of wine and music—

HIPPOMACHUS.

I differ from you. The enlightened Egyptians bring skeletons into their banquets, in order to remind their guests to make the most of their life while they have it.

CALLICLES.

I want neither skeleton nor sophist to teach me that lesson. More wine, I pray you, and less wisdom. If you must believe something which you never can know, why not

* Homer's Odyssey, xii. 63. † See the close of Plato's Gorgias.

be contented with the long stories about the other world which are told us when we are initiated at the * Eleusinian mysteries.

CHARICLEA.

And what are those stories?

ALCIBIADES.

Are not you initiated, Chariclea?

CHARICLEA.

No; my mother was a Lydian, a barbarian; and therefore—

ALCIBIADES.

I understand. Now the curse of Venus on the fools who made so hateful a law. Speusippus, does not your friend Euripides † say—

"The land where thou art prosperous is thy country?"

Surely we ought to say to every lady

"The land where thou art pretty is thy country."

Besides, to exclude foreign beauties from the chorus of the initiated in the Elysian fields is less cruel to them than to ourselves. Chariclea, you shall be initiated.

CHARICLEA.

When?

ALCIBIADES.

Now.

CHARICLEA.

Where?

ALCIBIADES.

Here.

CHARICLEA.

Delightful!

*The scene which follows is founded upon history. Thucydides tells us, in his sixth book, that about this time Alcibiades was suspected of having assisted at a mock celebration of these famous mysteries. It was the opinion of the vulgar among the Athenians that extraordinary privileges were granted in the other world to all who had been initiated.

† The right of Euripides to this line is somewhat disputable. See Aristophanes; Plutus, 1152.

SPEUSIPPUS.

But there must be an interval of a year between the purification and the initiation.

ALCIBIADES.

We will suppose all that.

SPEUSIPPUS.

And nine days of rigid mortification of the senses.

ALCIBIADES.

We will suppose that too. I am sure it was supposed, with as little reason, when I was initiated.

SPEUSIPPUS.

But you are sworn to secrecy.

ALCIBIADES.

You a sophist, and talk of oaths! You a pupil of Euripides, and forget his maxims?

"My lips have sworn it; but my mind is free." *

SPEUSIPPUS.

But Alcibiades—

ALCIBIADES.

What! Are you afraid of Ceres and Proserpine?

SPEUSIPPUS.

No—but—but—I—that is I—but it is best to be safe—I mean—Suppose there should be something in it.

ALCIBIADES.

Now, by Mercury, I shall die with laughing. Oh, Speusippus, Speusippus! Go back to your old father. Dig vineyards, and judge causes, and be a respectable citizen. But never, while you live, again dream of being a philosopher.

* See Euripides; Hyppolytus, 608. For the jesuitical morality of this line Euripides is bitterly attacked by the comic poet.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay, I was only—

ALCIBIADES.

A pupil of Gorgias and Melesigenes afraid of Tartarus! In what region of the infernal world do you expect your domicile to be fixed? Shall you roll a stone like Sisyphus? Hard exercise, Speusippus!

SPEUSIPPUS.

In the name of all the gods—

ALCIBIADES.

Or shall you sit starved and thirsty in the midst of fruit and wine like Tantalus? Poor fellow! I think I see your face as you are springing up to the branches and missing your aim. Oh, Bacchus! Oh, Mercury!

SPEUSIPPUS.

Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Or perhaps you will be food for a vulture, like the huge fellow who was rude to Latona.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Never fear. Minos will not be so cruel. Your eloquence will triumph over all accusations. The furies will skulk away like disappointed sycophants. Only address the judges of hell in the speech which you were prevented from speaking last assembly. "When I consider"—is not that the beginning of it? Come, man, do not be angry. Why do you pace up and down with such long steps? You are not in Tartarus yet. You seem to think that you are already stalking like poor Achilles,

"With stride
"Majestic through the plain of Asphodel." *

SPEUSIPPUS.

How can you talk so, when you know that I believe all that foolery as little as you do?

* See Homer's Odyssey, xi. 538.

ALCIBIADES.

Then march. You shall be the crier.* Callicles, you shall carry the torch. Why do you stare?

CALLICLES.

I do not much like the frolic.

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, surely you are not taken with a fit of piety. If all be true that is told of you, you have as little reason to think the gods vindictive as any man breathing. If you be not belied, a certain golden goblet which I have seen at your house was once in the temple of Juno at Coreyra. And men say that there was a priestess at Tarentum—

CALLICLES.

A fig for the gods! I was thinking about the Archons. You will have an accusation laid against you to-morrow. It is not very pleasant to be tried before the king.†

ALCIBIADES.

Never fear: there is not a sycophant in Attica who would dare to breathe a word against me, for the golden ‡ plane-tree of the great king.

HIPPOMACHUS.

That plane-tree—

ALCIBIADES.

Never mind the plane-tree. Come, Callicles, you were not so timid when you plundered the merchantman off Cape Malea. Take up the torch and move. Hippomachus, tell one of the slaves to bring a sow.§

CALLICLES.

And what part are you to play?

* The crier and torch-bearer were important functionaries at the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries.

† The name of king was given in the Athenian democracy to the magistrate who exercised those spiritual functions which in the monarchical times had belonged to the sovereign. His court took cognizance of offences against the religion of the state.

‡ See Herodotus, viii. 28.

§ A sow was sacrificed to Ceres at the admission to the greater mysteries.

ALCIBIADES.

I shall be hierophant. Herald, to your office. Torch-bearer, advance with the lights. Come forward, fair novice. We will celebrate the rite within. (*Exeunt.*)

CRITICISMS ON THE PRINCIPAL ITALIAN WRITERS.

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, January*, 1824.)

No. I. DANTE.

Fairest of stars, last in the train of night
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet. MILTON.

In a review of Italian literature, Dante has a double claim to precedency. He was the earliest and the greatest writer of his country. He was the first man who fully descried and exhibited the powers of his native dialect. The Latin tongue, which, under the most favorable circumstances, and in the hands of the greatest masters, had still been poor, feeble, and singularly unpoetical, and which had, in the age of Dante, been debased by the admixture of innumerable barbarous words and idioms, was still cultivated with superstitious veneration, and received, in the last stage of corruption, more honors than it had deserved in the period of its life and vigor. It was the language of the cabinet, of the university, of the church. It was employed by all who aspired to distinction in the higher walks of poetry. In compassion to the ignorance of his mistress, a cavalier might now and then proclaim his passion in Tuscan or Provençal rhymes. The vulgar might occasionally be edified by a pious allegory in the popular jargon. But no writer had conceived it possible that the dialect of peasants and market-women should possess sufficient energy and precision for a majestic and durable work. Dante adventured first. He detected the rich treasures of thought and diction which still lay latent in their ore. He refined them into purity. He burnished them into splendor. He fitted them for every purpose of

use and magnificence. And he thus acquired the glory, not only of producing the finest narrative poem of modern times, but also of creating a language, distinguished by unrivalled melody, and peculiarly capable of furnishing to lofty and passionate thoughts their appropriate garb of severe and concise expression.

To many this may appear a singular panegyric on the Italian tongue. Indeed the great majority of the young gentlemen and young ladies, who, when they are asked whether they read Italian, answer "Yes," never go beyond the stories at the end of their grammar,—The Pastor Fido, —or an act of Artaserse. They could as soon read a Babylonian brick as a canto of Dante. Hence it is a general opinion among those who know little or nothing of the subject, that this admirable language is adapted only to the effeminate cant of sonnetteers, musicians and connoisseurs.

The fact is, that Dante and Petrarch have been the Oromasdes and Arimanes of Italian literature. I wish not to detract from the merits of Petrarch. No one can doubt that his poems exhibit, amidst some imbecility and more affectation, much elegance, ingenuity and tenderness. They present us with a mixture which can only be compared to the whimsical concert described by the humorous poet of Modena:

> "S' udian gli usignuoli, al primo albore,
> E gli asini cantar versi d' amore."*

I am not, however, at present speaking of the intrinsic excellencies of his writings, which I shall take another opportunity to examine, but of the effect which they produce on the literature of Italy. The florid and luxurious charms of his style enticed the poets and the public from the contemplation of nobler and sterner models. In truth, though a rude state of society is that in which great original works are most frequently produced, it is also that in which they are worst appreciated. This may appear paradoxical; but it is proved by experience, and is consistent with reason. To be without any received canons of taste is good for the few who can create, but bad for the many who can only imitate and judge. Great and active minds cannot remain at rest. In a cultivated age they are too often contented to move on in the beaten path. But where no path exists they will make one. Thus the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Divine Comedy, appeared in dark and half barbarous times: and thus of the few

* Tassoni; Secchia Rapita, canto 1., stanza 6.

original works which have been produced in more polished ages, we owe a large proportion to men in low stations and of uninformed minds. I will instance, in our own language, the Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe. Of all the prose works of fiction which we possess, these are, I will not say the best, but the most peculiar, the most unprecedented, the most inimitable. Had Bunyan and Defoe been educated gentlemen, they would probably have published translations and imitations of French romances "by a person of quality." I am not sure that we should have had Lear if Shakspeare had been able to read Sophocles.

But these circumstances, while they foster genius, are unfavorable to the science of criticism. Men judge by comparison. They are unable to estimate the grandeur of an object when there is no standard by which they can measure it. One of the French philosophers (I beg Gerard's pardon), who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt, tells us that, when he first visited the great Pyramid, he was surprised to see it so diminutive. It stood alone in a boundless plain. There was nothing near it from which he could calculate its magnitude. But when the camp was pitched beside it, and the tents appeared like diminutive specks around its base, he then perceived the immensity of this mightiest work of man. In the same manner, it is not till a crowd of petty writers has sprung up that the merit of the great master-spirits of literature is understood.

We have indeed ample proof that Dante was highly admired in his own and the following age. I wish that we had equal proof that he was admired for his excellencies. But it is a remarkable corroboration of what has been said, that this great man seems to have been utterly unable to appreciate himself. In his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, he talks with satisfaction of what he has done for Italian literature, of the purity and correctness of his style. "*Cependant*," says a favorite * writer of mine, "*il n'est ni pur, ni correct, mais il est créateur.*" Considering the difficulties with which Dante had to struggle, we may perhaps be more inclined than the French critic to allow him this praise. Still it is by no means his highest or most peculiar title to applause. It is scarcely necessary to say that those qualities which escaped the notice of the poet himself were not likely to attract the attention of the commentators. The fact is, that, while the public homage was paid to some absurdities with which his

* Sismondi ; Littérature du Midi de l' Europe.

works may be justly charged, and to many more which were falsely imputed to them,—while lecturers were paid to expound and eulogize his physics, his metaphysics, his theology, all bad of their kind,—while annotators labored to detect allegorical meanings of which the author never dreamed, the great powers of his imagination, and the incomparable force of his style, were neither admired nor imitated. Arimanes had prevailed. The Divine Comedy was to that age what St. Paul's Cathedral was to Omai. The poor Otaheitean stared listlessly for a moment at the huge cupola, and ran into a toyshop to play with beads. Italy, too, was charmed with literary trinkets, and played with them for four centuries.

From the time of Petrarch to the appearance of Alfieri's tragedies, we may trace in almost every page of Italian literature the influence of those celebrated sonnets which, from the nature both of their beauties and their faults, were peculiarly unfit to be models for general imitation. Almost all the poets of that period, however different in the degree and quality of their talents, are characterized by great exaggeration, and, as a necessary consequence, great coldness of sentiment; by a passion for frivolous and tawdry ornament; and, above all, by an extreme feebleness and diffuseness of style. Tasso, Marino, Guarini, Metastasio, and a crowd of writers of inferior merit and celebrity, were spell-bound in the enchanted gardens of a gaudy and meretricious Alcina, who concealed debility and deformity beneath the deceitful semblance of loveliness and health. Ariosto, the great Ariosto himself, like his own Ruggiero, stooped for a time to linger amidst the magic flowers and fountains, and to caress the gay and painted sorceress. But to him, as to his own Ruggiero, had been given the omnipotent ring and the winged courser, which bore him from the paradise of deception to the regions of light and nature.

The evil of which I speak was not confined to the graver poets. It infected satire, comedy, burlesque. No person can admire more than I do the great master-pieces of wit and humor which Italy has produced. Still I cannot but discern and lament a great deficiency, which is common to them all. I find in them abundance of ingenuity, of droll naïveté, of profound and just reflection, of happy expression. Manners, characters, opinions, are treated with "a most learned spirit of human dealing." But something is still wanting. We read, and we admire, and we yawn. We look in vain for the bacchanalian fury which inspired the comedy of

Athens, for the fierce and withering scorn which animates the invectives of Juvenal and Dryden, or even for the compact and pointed diction which adds zest to the verses of Pope and Boileau. There is no enthusiasm, no energy, no condensation, nothing which springs from strong feeling, nothing which tends to excite it. Many fine thoughts and fine expressions reward the toil of reading. Still it is a toil. The Secchia Rapita, in some points the best poem of its kind, is painfully diffuse and languid. The Animali Parlanti of Casti is perfectly intolerable. I admire the dexterity of the plot, and the liberality of the opinions. I admit that it is impossible to turn to a page which does not contain something that deserves to be remembered; but it is at least six times as long as it ought to be. And the garrulous feebleness of the style is a still greater fault than the length of the work.

It may be thought that I have gone too far in attributing these evils to the influence of the works and the fame of Petrarch. It cannot, however, be doubted that they have arisen, in a great measure, from a neglect of the style of Dante. This is not more proved by the decline of Italian poetry than by its resuscitation. After the lapse of four hundred and fifty years, there appeared a man capable of appreciating and imitating the father of Tuscan literature—Vittorio Alfieri. Like the prince in the nursery tale, he sought and found the Sleeping Beauty within the recesses which had so long concealed her from mankind. The portal was indeed rusted by time;—the dust of ages had accumulated on the hangings;—the furniture was of antique fashion;—and the gorgeous color of the embroidery had faded. But the living charms which were well worth all the rest remained in the bloom of eternal youth, and well rewarded the bold adventurer who roused them from their long slumber. In every line of the Philip and the Saul, the greatest poems, I think, of the eighteenth century, we may trace the influence of that mighty genius which has immortalized the ill-starred love of Francesca, and the paternal agonies of Ugolino. Alfieri bequeathed the sovereignty of Italian literature to the author of the Aristodemus—a man of genius scarcely inferior to his own, and a still more devoted disciple of the great Florentine. It must be acknowledged that this eminent writer has sometimes pushed too far his idolatry of Dante. To borrow a sprightly illustration from Sir John Denham, he has not only imitated his garb, but borrowed his clothes. He

often quotes his phrases; and he has, not very judiciously as it appears to me, imitated his versification. Nevertheless, he has displayed many of the higher excellencies of his master; and his works may justly inspire us with a hope that Italian language will long flourish under a new literary dynasty, or rather under the legitimate line, which has at length been restored to a throne long occupied by specious usurpers.

The man to whom the literature of his country owes its origin and its revival was born in times singularly adapted to call forth his extraordinary powers. Religious zeal, chivalrous love and honor, democratic liberty, are the three most powerful principles that have ever influenced the character of large masses of men. Each of them singly has often excited the greatest enthusiasm, and produced the most important changes. In the time of Dante all the three, often in amalgamation, generally in conflict, agitated the public mind. The preceding generation had witnessed the wrongs and the revenge of the brave, the accomplished, the unfortunate Emperor Frederic the Second,—a poet in an age of schoolmen,—a philosopher in an age of monks,—a statesman in an age of crusaders. During the whole life of the poet, Italy was experiencing the consequences of the memorable struggle which he had maintained against the Church. The finest works of imagination have always been produced in times of political convulsion, as the richest vineyards and the sweetest flowers always grow on the soil which has been fertilized by the fiery deluge of a volcano. To look no further than the literary history of our own country, can we doubt that Shakspeare was in a great measure produced by the Reformation, and Wordsworth by the French Revolution? Poets often avoid political transactions; they often effect to despise them. But, whether they perceive it or not, they must be influenced by them. As long as their minds have any point of contact with those of their fellow-men, the electric impulse, at whatever distance it may originate, will be circuitously communicated to them.

This will be the case even in large societies, where the division of labor enables many speculative men to observe the face of nature, or to analyze their own minds, at a distance from the seat of political transactions. In the little republic of which Dante was a member the state of things was very different. These small communities are most unmercifully abused by most of our modern professors of the science of government. In such states they tell us, factions

are always most violent: where both parties are cooped up within a narrow space, political difference necessarily produces personal malignity. Every man must be a soldier; every moment may produce a war. No citizen can lie down secure that he shall not be roused by the alarm-bell, to repel or avenge an injury. In such petty quarrels Greece squandered the blood which might have purchased for her the permanent empire of the world, and Italy wasted the energy, and the abilities which would have enabled her to defend her independence against the Pontiffs and the Cæsars.

All this is true: yet there is still a compensation. Mankind has not derived so much benefit from the empire of Rome as from the city of Athens, nor from the kingdom of France as from the city of Florence. The violence of party feeling may be an evil; but it calls forth that activity of mind which in some states of society it is desirable to produce at any expense. Universal soldiership may be an evil; but where every man is a soldier there will be no standing army. And is it no evil that one man in every fifty should be bred to the trade of slaughter; should live only by destroying and by exposing himself to be destroyed; should fight without enthusiasm and conquer without glory; be sent to a hospital when wounded, and rot on a dunghill when old? Such, over more than two-thirds of Europe, is the fate of soldiers. It was something that the citizen of Milan or Florence fought, not merely in the vague and rhetorical sense in which the words are often used, but in sober truth, for his parents, his children, his lands, his house, his altars. It was something that he marched forth to battle beneath the Carroccio, which had been the object of his childish veneration; that his aged father looked down from the battlements on his exploits; that his friends and his rivals were the witnesses of his glory. If he fell, he was consigned to no venal or heedless guardians. The same day saw him conveyed within the walls which he had defended His wounds were dressed by his mother; his confession was whispered to the friendly priest who had heard and absolved the follies of his youth; his last sigh was breathed upon the lips of the lady of his love. Surely there is no sword like that which is beaten out of a ploughshare. Surely this state of things was not unmixedly bad: its evils were alleviated by enthusiasm and by tenderness; and it will at least be acknowledged that it was well fitted to nurse poetical genius in an imaginative and observant mind.

Nor did the religious spirit of the age tend less to this result than its political circumstances. Fanaticism is an evil, but it is not the greatest of evils. It is good that a people should be roused by any means from a state of utter torpor;—that their minds should be diverted from objects merely sensual, to meditations, however erroneous, on the mysteries of the moral and intellectual world; and from interests which are immediately selfish to those which relate to the past, the future, and the remote. These effects have sometimes been produced by the worst superstitions that ever existed; but the Catholic religion, even in the time of its utmost extravagance and atrocity, never wholly lost the spirit of the Great Teacher, whose precepts form the noblest code, as his conduct furnished the purest example, of moral excellence. It is of all religions the most poetical. The ancient superstitions furnished the fancy with beautiful images, but took no hold on the heart. The doctrines of the Reformed Churches have most powerfully influenced the feelings and the conduct of men, but have not presented them with visions of sensible beauty and grandeur. The Roman Catholic Church has united to the awful doctrines of the one what Mr. Coleridge calls the "fair humanities" of the other. It has enriched sculpture and painting with the loveliest and most majestic forms. To the Phidian Jupiter it can oppose the Moses of Michael Angelo; and to the voluptuous beauty of the Queen of Cyprus, the serene and pensive loveliness of the Virgin Mother. The legends of its martyrs and its saints may vie in ingenuity and interest with the mythological fables of Greece; its ceremonies and processions were the delight of the vulgar; the huge fabric of secular power with which it was connected attracted the admiration of the statesman. At the same time, it never lost sight of the most solemn and tremendous doctrines of Christianity, — the incarnate God, — the judgment, — the retribution,—the eternity of happiness or torment. Thus, while, like the ancient religions, it received incalculable support from policy and ceremony, it never wholly became, like those religions, a merely political and ceremonial institution.

The beginning of the thirteenth century was, as Machiavelli has remarked, the era of a great revival of this extraordinary system. The policy of Innocent,—the growth of the inquisition and the mendicant orders,—the wars against the Albigenses, the Pagans of the East, and the unfortunate

princes of the house of Swabia, agitated Italy during the two following generations. In this point Dante was completely under the influence of his age. He was a man of a turbid and melancholy spirit. In early youth he had entertained a strong and unfortunate passion, which, long after the death of her whom he loved, continued to haunt him. Dissipation, ambition, misfortunes had not effaced it. He was not only a sincere, but a passionate, believer. The crimes and abuses of the Church of Rome were indeed loathsome to him; but to all its doctrines and all its rites he adhered with enthusiastic fondness and veneration; and, at length, driven from his native country, reduced to a situation the most painful to a man of his disposition, condemned to learn by experience that no * food is so bitter as the bread of dependence, and no ascent so painful as the staircase of a patron, —his wounded spirit took refuge in visionary devotion. Beatrice, the unforgotten object of his early tenderness, was invested by his imagination with glorious and mysterious attributes; she was enthroned among the highest of the celestial hierarchy: Almighty Wisdom had assigned to her the care of the sinful and unhappy wanderer who had loved her with such a perfect love. † By a confusion, like that which often takes place in dreams, he has sometimes lost sight of her human nature, and even of her personal existence, and seems to consider her as one of the attributes of the Deity.

But those religious hopes which had released the mind of the sublime enthusiast from the terrors of death had not rendered his speculations on human life more cheerful. This is an inconsistency which may often be observed in men of a similar temperament. He hoped for happiness beyond the grave: but he felt none on earth. It is from this cause, more than from any other, that his description of Heaven is so far inferior to the Hell or the Purgatory. With the passions and miseries of the suffering spirits he feels a strong sympathy. But among the beatified he appears as one who has nothing in common with them,—as one who is incapable of comprehending, not only the degree, but the nature of their enjoyment. We think that we see him standing amidst those smiling and radiant spirits with

* "Tu proverai si come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle
Lo scendere e 'l salir per l' altrui scale."
Paradiso, canto xvii

† "L' amico mio, e non della ventura."—*Inferno*, canto ii.

that scowl of unutterable misery on his brow, and that curl of bitter disdain on his lips, which all his portraits have preserved and which might furnish Chantrey with hints for the head of his projected Satan.

There is no poet whose intellectual and moral character are so closely connected. The great source, as it appears to me, of the power of the Divine Comedy is the strong belief with which the story seems to be told. In this respect, the only books which approach to its excellence are Gulliver's Travels and Robinson Crusoe. The solemnity of his asseverations, the consistency and minuteness of his details, the earnestness with which he labors to make the reader understand the exact shape and size of every thing that he describes, give an air of reality to his wildest fictions. I should only weaken this statement by quoting instances of a feeling which pervades the whole work, and to which it owes much of its fascination. This is the real justification of the many passages in his poem which bad critics have condemned as grotesque. I am concerned to see that Mr. Cary, to whom Dante owes more than ever poet owed to translator, has sanctioned an accusation utterly unworthy of his abilities. "His solicitude," says that gentleman, "to define all his images in such a manner as to bring them within the circle of our vision, and to subject them to the power of the pencil, renders him little better than grotesque, where Milton has since taught us to expect sublimity." It is true that Dante has never shrunk from embodying his conceptions in determinate words, that he has even given measure and numbers, where Milton would have left his images to float undefined in a gorgeous haze of language. Both were right. Milton did not profess to have been in heaven or hell. He might therefore reasonably confine himself to magnificent generalities. Far different was the office of the lonely traveller, who had wandered through the nation of the dead. Had he described the abode of the rejected spirits in language resembling the splendid lines of the English poet,—had he told us of—

> "An universe of death, which God by curse
> Created evil, for evil only good,
> Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds
> Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious things,
> Abominable, unutterable, and worse
> Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
> Gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire,"—

this would doubtless have been noble writing. But where

would have been that strong impression of reality, which, in accordance with his plan, it should have been his great object to produce? It was absolutely necessary for him to delineate accurately "all monstrous, all prodigious things," —to utter what might to others appear "unutterable," —to relate with the air of truth what fables had never feigned,—to embody what fear had never conceived. And I will frankly confess that the vague sublimity of Milton affects me less than these reviled details of Dante. We read Milton; and we know that we are reading a great poet. When we read Dante, the poet vanishes. We are listening to the man who has returned from "the valley of the dolorous abyss;" *—we seem to see the dilated eye of horror, to hear the shuddering accents with which he tells his fearful tale. Considered in this light, the narratives are exactly what they should be,—definite in themselves, but suggesting to the mind ideas of awful and indefinite wonder. They are made up of the images of the earth:—they are told in the language of the earth.—Yet the whole effect is, beyond expression, wild and unearthly. The fact is, that supernatural beings, as long as they are considered merely with reference to their own nature, excite our feelings very feebly. It is when the great gulf which separates them from us is passed, when we suspect some strange and undefinable relation between the laws of the visible and the invisible world, that they rouse, perhaps, the strongest emotions of which our nature is capable. How many children, and how many men, are afraid of ghosts, who are not afraid of God! And this, because, though they entertain a much stronger conviction of the existence of a Deity than of the reality of apparitions, they have no apprehension that he will manifest himself to them in any sensible manner. While this is the case, to describe superhuman beings in the language, and to attribute to them the actions, of humanity may be grotesque, unphilosophical, inconsistent; but it will be the only mode of working upon the feelings of men, and, therefore, the only mode suited for poetry. Shakspeare understood this well, as he understood every thing that belonged to his art. Who does not sympathize with the rapture of Ariel, flying after sunset on the wings of the bat, or sucking in the cups of flowers with the bee? Who does not shudder at the caldron of Macbeth? Where is the philosopher who is not moved when he thinks of the strange connection be-

* "La valle d' abisso doloroso"—*Inferno*, canto iv.

tween the infernal spirits and "the sow's blood that hath eaten her nine farrow?" But this difficult task of representing supernatural beings to our minds, in a manner which shall be neither unintelligible to our intellects, nor wholly inconsistent with our ideas of their nature, has never been so well performed as by Dante. I will refer to three instances, which are, perhaps, the most striking—the description of the transformations of the serpents and the robbers, in the twenty-fifth canto of the Inferno,—the passage concerning Nimrod, in the thirty-first canto of the same part, —and the magnificent procession in the twenty-ninth canto of the Purgatorio.

The metaphors and comparisons of Dante harmonize admirably with that air of strong reality of which I have spoken. They have a very peculiar character. He is perhaps the only poet whose writings would become much less intelligible if all illustrations of this sort were expunged. His similes are frequently rather those of a traveller than of a poet. He employs them not to display his ingenuity by fanciful analogies,—not to delight the reader by affording him a distant and passing glimpse of beautiful images remote from the path in which he is proceeding,—but to give an exact idea of the objects which he is describing, by comparing them with others generally known. The boiling pitch in Malebolge was like that in the Venetian arsenal:—the mound on which he travelled along the banks of Phlegethon was like that between Ghent and Bruges, but not so large:—the cavities where the Simoniacal prelates are confined resembled the fonts in the Church of John at Florence. Every reader of Dante will recall many other illustrations of this description, which add to the appearance of sincerity and earnestness from which the narrative derives so much of its interest.

Many of his comparisons, again, are intended to give an exact idea of his feelings under particular circumstances. The delicate shades of grief, of fear, of anger, are rarely discriminated with sufficient accuracy in the language of the most refined nations. A rude dialect never abounds in nice distinctions of this kind. Dante therefore employs the most accurate and infinitely the most poetical mode of marking the precise state of his mind. Every person who has experienced the bewildering effect of sudden bad tidings,—the stupefaction,—the vague doubt of the truth of our own perceptions which they produce,—will understand the following simile:

—"I was as he is who dreameth his own harm,—who, dreaming, wishes that it may be all a dream, so that he desires that which is as though it were not." This is only one out of a hundred equally striking and expressive similitudes The comparisons of Homer and Milton are magnificent digressions. It scarcely injures their effect to detach them from the work. Those of Dante are very different. They derive their beauty from the context, and reflect beauty upon it. His embroidery cannot be taken out without spoiling the whole web. I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without advising every person who can muster sufficient Italian to read the simile of the sheep, in the third canto of the Purgatorio. I think it the most perfect passage of the kind in the world, the most imaginative, the most picturesque, and the most sweetly expressed.

No person can have attended to the Divine Comedy without observing how little impression the forms of the external world appear to have made on the mind of Dante. His temper and his situation had led him to fix his observation almost exclusively on human nature. The exquisite opening of the eighth * canto of the Purgatorio affords a strong instance of this. He leaves to others the earth, the ocean, and the sky. His business is with man. To other writers, evening may be the season of dews and stars and radiant clouds. To Dante it is the hour of fond recollection and passionate devotion,—the hour which melts the heart of the mariner and kindles the love of the pilgrim,—the hour when the toll of the bell seems to mourn for another day which is gone and will return no more.

The feeling of the present age has taken a direction diametrically opposite. The magnificence of the physical world, and its influence upon the human mind, have been the favorite themes of our most eminent poets. The herd of blue-stocking ladies and sonneteering gentlemen seem to consider a strong sensibility to the "splendor of the grass, the

* I cannot help observing that Gray's imitation of that noble line

"Che paia 'l giorno pianger che si muore,"

is one of the most striking instances of injudicious plagiarism with which I am acquainted. Dante did not put this strong personification at the beginning of his description. The imagination of the reader is so well prepared for it by the previous lines, that it appears perfectly natural and pathetic. Placed as Gray has placed it, neither preceded nor followed by any thing that harmonizes with it, it becomes a frigid conceit. Woe to the unskilful rider who ventures on the horses of Achilles.

οἱ δ' ἀλεγεινοὶ
ἀνδράσι γε βροτοῖσι δαμήμεναι ἠδ' ὀχέεσθαι,
ἀλλῳ γ' ἢ Ἀχιλῆϊ τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ.

glory of the flower," as an ingredient absolutely indispensable in the formation of a poetical mind. They treat with contempt all writers who are unfortunately

> nec ponere lucum
> Artifices, nec rus saturum laudare.

The orthodox poetical creed is more Catholic. The noblest earthly object of the contemplation of man is man himself. The universe, and all its fair and glorious forms, are indeed included in the wide empire of the imagination; but she has placed her home and her sanctuary amidst the inexhaustible varieties and the impenetrable mysteries of the mind.

> In tutte parti impera, e quivi regge;
> Quivi è la sua cittade, e l' alto seggio.*

Othello is perhaps the greatest work in the world. From what does it derive its power? From the clouds? From the ocean? From the mountains? Or from love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave! What is it that we go forth to see in Hamlet? Is it a reed shaken with the wind? A small celandine? A bed of daffodils? Or is it to contemplate a mighty and wayward mind laid bare before us to the inmost recesses? It may perhaps be doubted whether the lakes and the hills are better fitted for the education of a poet than the dusky streets of a huge capital. Indeed who is not tired to death with pure description of scenery? Is it not the fact, that external objects never strongly excite our feelings but when they are contemplated in reference to man, as illustrating his destiny, or as influencing his character? The most beautiful object in the world, it will be allowed, is a beautiful woman. But who that can analyze his feelings is not sensible that she owes her fascination less to grace of outline and delicacy of color, than to a thousand associations which, often unperceived by ourselves, connect those qualities with the source of our existence, with the nourishment of our infancy, with the passions of our youth, with the hopes of our age, with elegance, with vivacity, with tenderness, with the strongest of natural instincts, with the dearest of social ties?

To those who think thus, the insensibility of the Florentine poet to the beauties of nature will not appear an unpardonable deficiency. On mankind no writer, with the exception of Shakspeare, has looked with a more penetrating eye. I have said that his poetical character had derived a tinge from his peculiar temper. It is on the sterner and

* Inferno, canto i.

darker passions that he delights to dwell. All love, excepting the half mystic passion which he still felt for his buried Beatrice, had palled on the fierce and restless exile. The sad story of Rimini is almost a single exception. I know not whether it has been remarked, that, in one point, misanthropy seems to have affected his mind as it did that of Swift. Nauseous and revolting images seem to have had a fascination for his mind; and he repeatedly places before his readers, with all the energy of his incomparable style, the most loathsome objects of the sewer and the dissecting-room.

There is another peculiarity in the poem of Dante, which, I think, deserves notice. Ancient mythology has hardly ever been successfully interwoven with modern poetry. One class of writers have introduced the fabulous deities merely as allegorical representatives of love, wine, or wisdom. This necessarily renders their works tame and cold. We may sometimes admire their ingenuity; but with what interest can we read of beings of whose personal existence the writer does not suffer us to entertain, for a moment, even a conventional belief? Even Spenser's allegory is scarcely tolerable, till we contrive to forget that Una signifies innocence, and consider her merely as an oppressed lady under the protection of a generous knight.

Those writers who have, more judiciously, attempted to preserve the personality of the classical divinities have failed from a different cause. They have been imitators, and imitators at a disadvantage. Euripides and Catullus believed in Bacchus and Cybele as little as we do. But they lived among men who did. Their imaginations, if not their opinions, took the color of the age. Hence the glorious inspiration of the Bacchæ and the Atys. Our minds are formed by circumstances: and I do not believe that it would be in the power of the greatest modern poet to lash himself up to a degree of enthusiasm adequate to the production of such works.

Dante alone, among the poets of later times, has been, in this respect, neither an allegorist nor an imitator; and, consequently, he alone has introduced the ancient fictions with effect. His Minos, his Charon, his Pluto, are absolutely terrific. Nothing can be more beautiful or original than the use which he has made of the river of Lethe. He has never assigned to his mythological characters any functions inconsistent with the creed of the Catholic Church He has related nothing concerning them which a good

Christian of that age might not believe possible. On this account, there is nothing in these passages that appears puerile or pedantic. On the contrary, this singular use of classical names suggests to the mind a vague and awful idea of some mysterious revelation, anterior to all recorded history, of which the dispersed fragments might have been retained amidst the impostures and superstitions of later religions. Indeed the mythology of the Divine Comedy is of the elder and more colossal mould. It breathes the spirit of Homer and Æschylus, not of Ovid and Claudian.

This is the more extraordinary, since Dante seems to have been utterly ignorant of the Greek language; and his favorite Latin models could only have served to mislead him. Indeed, it is impossible not to remark his admiration of writers far inferior to himself; and, in particular, his idolatry of Virgil, who, elegant and splendid as he is, has no pretensions to the depth and originality of mind which characterize his Tuscan worshipper. In truth, it may be laid down as an almost universal rule that good poets are bad critics. Their minds are under the tyranny of ten thousand associations imperceptible to others. The worst writer may easily happen to touch a spring which is connected in their minds with a long succession of beautiful images. They are like the gigantic slaves of Aladdin, gifted with matchless power, but bound by spells so mighty that when a child whom they could have crushed touched a talisman, of whose secret he was ignorant, they immediately became his vassals. It has more than once happened to me to see minds, graceful and majestic as the Titania of Shakspeare, bewitched by the charms of an ass's head, bestowing on it the fondest caresses, and crowning it with the sweetest flowers. I need only mention the poems attributed to Ossian. They are utterly worthless, except as an edifying instance of the success of a story without evidence, and of a book without merit. They are a chaos of words which present no image, of images which have no archetype:—they are without form and void; and darkness is upon the face of them. Yet how many men of genius have panegyrized and imitated them!

The style of Dante is, if not his highest, perhaps his most peculiar excellence. I know nothing with which it can be compared. The noblest models of Greek composition must yield to it. His words are the fewest and the best which it is possible to use. The first expression in which he clothes his thoughts is always so energetic and comprehensive that

amplification would only injure the effect. There is probably no writer in any language who has presented so many strong pictures to the mind. Yet there is probably no writer equally concise. This perfection of style is the principal merit of the Paradiso, which, as I have already remarked, is by no means equal in other respects to the two preceding parts of the poem. The force and felicity of the diction, however, irresistibly attract the reader through the theological lectures and the sketches of ecclesiastical biography with which this division of the work too much abounds. It may seem almost absurd to quote particular specimens of an excellence which is diffused over all his hundred cantos. I will, however, instance the third canto of the Inferno, and the sixth of the Purgatorio, as passages incomparable in their kind. The merit of the latter is, perhaps, rather oratorical than poetical; nor can I recollect any thing in the great Athenian speeches which equals it in force of invective and bitterness of sarcasm. I have heard the most eloquent statesmen of the age remark that, next to Demosthenes, Dante is the writer who ought to be most attentively studied by every man who desires to attain oratorical eminence.

But it is time to close this feeble and rambling critique. I cannot refrain, however, from saying a few words upon the translations of the Divine Comedy. Boyd's is as tedious and languid as the original is rapid and forcible. The strange measure which he has chosen, and, for aught I know, invented, is most unfit for such a work. Translations ought never to be written in a verse which requires much command of rhyme. The stanza becomes a bed of Procrustes; and the thoughts of the unfortunate author are alternately racked and curtailed to fit their new receptacle. The abrupt and yet consecutive style of Dante suffers more than that of any other poet by a version diffuse in style, and divided into paragraphs, for they deserve no other name, of equal length.

Nothing can be said in favor of Hayley's attempt, but that it is better than Boyd's. His mind was a tolerable specimen of filagree work,—rather elegant, and very feeble. All that can be said for his best works is that they are neat. All that can be said against his worst is that they are stupid. He might have translated Metastasio tolerably. But he was utterly unable to do justice to the

> "rime e aspre e chiocce,
> Come si converrebbe al tristo buco." *

* Inferno, canto xxxii.

I turn with pleasure from these wretched performances to Mr. Cary's translation. It is a work which well deserves a separate discussion, and on which, if this article were not already too long, I could dwell with great pleasure. At present I will only say that there is no other version in the world, as far as I know, so faithful, yet that there is no other version which so fully proves that the translator is himself a man of poetical genius. Those who are ignorant of the Italian language should read it to become acquainted with the Divine Comedy. Those who are most intimate with Italian literature should read it for its original merits: and I believe that they will find it difficult to determine whether the author deserves most praise for his intimacy with the language of Dante, or for his extraordinary mastery over his own.

CRITICISMS ON THE PRINCIPAL ITALIAN WRITERS.

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, April*, 1824.)

No. II. PETRARCH.

Et vos, o lauri, carpam, et te, proxima myrte,
Sic positæ quoniam suaves miscetis odores. VIRGIL.

It would not be easy to name a writer whose celebrity, when both its extent and its duration are taken into the account, can be considered as equal to that of Petrarch. Four centuries and a half have elapsed since his death. Yet still the inhabitants of every nation throughout the western world are as familiar with his character and his adventures as with the most illustrious names, and the most recent anecdotes, of their own literary history. This is indeed a rare distinction. His detractors must acknowledge that it could not have been acquired by a poet destitute of merit. His admirers will scarcely maintain that the unassisted merit of Petrarch could have raised him to that eminence which has not yet been attained by Shakspeare, Milton, or Dante,—

that eminence, of which perhaps no modern writer, excepting himself and Cervantes, has long retained possession,—an European reputation.

It is not difficult to discover some of the causes to which this great man has owed a celebrity, which I cannot but think disproportioned to his real claims on the admiration of mankind. In the first place, he is an egotist. Egotism in conversation is universally abhorred. Lovers, and, I believe, lovers alone, pardon it in each other. No services, no talents, no powers of pleasing, render it endurable. Gratitude, admiration, interest, fear, scarcely prevent those who are condemned to listen to it from indicating their disgust and fatigue. The childless uncle, the powerful patron, can scarcely extort this compliance. We leave the inside of the mail in a storm, and mount the box, rather than hear the history of our companion. The chaplain bites his lips in the presence of the archbishop. The midshipman yawns at the table of the First Lord. Yet, from whatever cause, this practice, the pest of conversation, gives to writing a zest which nothing else can impart. Rousseau made the boldest experiment of this kind; and it fully succeeded. In our own time Lord Byron, by a series of attempts of the same nature, made himself the object of general interest and admiration. Wordsworth wrote with egotism more intense, but less obvious; and he has been rewarded with a sect of worshippers, comparatively small in number, but far more enthusiastic in their devotion. It is needless to multiply instances. Even now all the walks of literature are infested with mendicants for fame, who attempt to excite our interest by exhibiting all the distortions of their intellects, and stripping the covering from all the putrid sores of their feelings. Nor are there wanting many who push their imitation of the beggars whom they resemble a step further, and who find it easier to extort a pittance from the spectator, by simulating deformity and debility from which they are exempt, than by such honest labor as their health and strength enable them to perform. In the mean time the credulous public pities and pampers a nuisance which requires only the treadmill and the whip. This art, often successful when employed by dunces, gives irresistible fascination to works which possess intrinsic merit. We are always desirous to know something of the character and situation of those whose writings we have perused with pleasure. The passages in which Milton has alluded to his own circumstances

are perhaps read more frequently, and with more interest, than any other lines in his poems. It is amusing to observe with what labor critics have attempted to glean from the poems of Homer some hints as to his situation and feelings. According to one hypothesis, he intended to describe himself under the name of Demodocus. Others maintain that he was the identical Phemius whose life Ulysses spared. This propensity of the human mind explains, I think, in a great degree, the extensive popularity of a poet whose works are little else than the expression of his personal feelings.

In the second place, Petrarch was not only an egotist, but an amatory egotist. The hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, which he described, were derived from the passion which of all passions exerts the widest influence, and which of all passions borrows most from the imagination. He had also another immense advantage. He was the first eminent amatory poet who appeared after the great convulsion which had changed, not only the political, but the moral, state of the world. The Greeks, who, in their public institutions and their literary tastes, were diametrically opposed to the oriental nations, bore a considerable resemblance to those nations in their domestic habits. Like them, they despised the intellects and immured the persons of their women; and it was among the least of the frightful evils to which this pernicious system gave birth, that all the accomplishments of mind, and all the fascinations of manner, which, in a highly-cultivated age, will generally be necessary to attach men to their female associates, were monopolized by the Phrynes and the Lamias. The indispensable ingredients of honorable and chivalrous love were nowhere to be found united. The matrons and their daughters, confined in the harem,—insipid, uneducated, ignorant of all but the mechanical arts, scarcely seen till they were married,—could rarely excite interest; while their brilliant rivals, half graces, half harpies, elegant and informed, but fickle and rapacious, could never inspire respect.

The state of society in Rome was, in this point, far happier; and the Latin literature partook of the superiority. The Roman poets have decidedly surpassed those of Greece in the delineation of the passion of love. There is no subject which they have treated with so much success. Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, Horace, and Propertius, in spite of all their faults, must be allowed to rank high in this department of the art. To these I would add my favorite Plautus; who

though he took his plot from Greece, found, I suspect, the originals of his enchanting female characters at Rome.

Still many evils remained; and, in the decline of the great empire, all that was pernicious in its domestic institutions appeared more strongly. Under the influence of governments at once dependent and tyrannical, which purchased, by cringing to their enemies, the power of trampling on their subjects, the Romans sunk into the lowest state of effeminacy and debasement. Falsehood, cowardice, sloth, conscious and unrepining degradation, formed the national character. Such a character is totally incompatible with the stronger passion. Love, in particular, which in the modern sense of the word, implies protection and devotion on the one side, confidence on the other, respect and fidelity on both, could not exist among the sluggish and heartless slaves who cringed around the thrones of Honorius and Augustulus. At this period the great renovation commenced. The warriors of the north, destitute as they were of knowledge and humanity, brought with them, from their forests and marshes, those qualities without which humanity is a weakness, and knowledge a curse,—energy—independence—the dread of shame—the contempt of danger. It would be most interesting to examine the manner in which the admixture of the savage conqueror and the effeminate slaves, after many generations of darkness and agitation, produced the modern European character;—to trace back, from the first conflict to the final amalgamation, the operation of that mysterious alchemy, which, from hostile and worthless elements, has extracted the pure gold of human nature—to analyze the mass, and to determine the proportion in which the ingredients are mingled. But I will confine myself to the subject to which I have more particularly referred. The nature of the passion of love had undergone a complete change. It still retained, indeed, the fanciful and voluptuous character which it had possessed among the southern nations of antiquity. But it was tinged with the superstitious veneration with which the northern warriors had been accustomed to regard women. Devotion and war had imparted to it their most solemn and animating feelings. It was sanctified by the blessings of the Church, and decorated with the wreaths of the tournament. Venus, as in the ancient fable, was again rising above the dark and tempestuous waves which had so long covered her beauty. But she rose not now, as of old, in exposed and luxurious loveliness

She still wore the cestus of her ancient witchcraft; but the diadem of Juno was on her brow, and the ægis of Pallas in her hands. Love might, in fact, be called a new passion; and it is not astonishing that the first poet of eminence who wholly devoted his genius to this theme should have excited an extraordinary sensation. He may be compared to an adventurer who accidentally lands in a rich and unknown island; and who, though he may only set up an ill-shaped cross upon the shore, acquires possession of its treasures, and gives it his name. The claim of Petrarch was indeed somewhat like that of Amerigo Vespucci to the continent which should have derived its appellation from Columbus. The Provençal poets were unquestionably the masters of the Florentine. But they wrote in an age which could not appreciate their merits; and their imitator lived at the very period when composition in the vernacular language began to attract general attention. Petrarch was in literature what a Valentine is in love. The public preferred him, not because his merits were of a transcendent order, but because he was the first person whom they saw after they awoke from their long sleep.

Nor did Petrarch gain less by comparison with his immediate successors than with those who had preceded him. Till more than a century after his death Italy produced no poet who could be compared to him. This decay of genius is doubtless to be ascribed, in a great measure, to the influence which his own works had exercised upon the literature of his country. Yet it has conduced much to his fame. Nothing is more favorable to the reputation of a writer than to be succeeded by a race inferior to himself; and it is an advantage, from obvious causes, much more frequently enjoyed by those who corrupt the national taste than by those who improve it.

Another cause has co-operated with those which I have mentioned to spread the renown of Petrarch. I mean the interest which is inspired by the events of his life—an interest which must have been strongly felt by his contemporaries, since, after an interval of five hundred years, no critic can be wholly exempt from its influence. Among the great men to whom we owe the resuscitation of science he deserves the foremost place; and his enthusiastic attachment to this great cause constitutes his most just and splendid title to the gratitude of posterity. He was the votary of literature. He loved it with a perfect love. He wor-

shipped it with an almost fanatical devotion. He was the missionary, who proclaimed its discoveries to distant countries—the pilgrim, who travelled far and wide to collect its reliques—the hermit, who retired to seclusion to meditate on its beauties—the champion, who fought its battles—the conqueror, who, in more than a metaphorical sense, led barbarism and ignorance in triumph, and received in the capitol the laurel which his magnificent victory had earned.

Nothing can be conceived more noble or affecting than that ceremony. The superb palaces and porticoes, by which had rolled the ivory chariots of Marius and Cæsar, had long mouldered into dust. The laurelled fasces—the golden eagles—the shouting legions—the captives and the pictured cities—were indeed wanting to his victorious procession. The sceptre had passed away from Rome. But she still retained the mightier influence of an intellectual empire, and was now to confer the prouder reward of an intellectual triumph. To the man who had extended the dominion of her ancient language — who had erected the trophies of philosophy and imagination in the haunts of ignorance and ferocity—whose captives were the hearts of admiring nations enchained by the influence of his song—whose spoils were the treasures of ancient genius rescued from obscurity and decay—the Eternal City offered the just and glorious tribute of her gratitude. Amidst the ruined monuments of ancient and the infant erections of modern art, he who had restored the broken link between the two ages of human civilization was crowned with the wreath which he had deserved from the moderns who owed to him their refinement—from the ancients who owed to him their fame. Never was a coronation so august witnessed by Westminster or by Rheims.

When we turn from this glorious spectacle to the private chamber of the poet,—when we contemplate the struggle of passion and virtue,—the eye dimmed, the cheek furrowed, by the tears of sinful and hopeless desire,—when we reflect on the whole history of his attachment, from the gay fantasy of his youth to the lingering despair of his age, pity and affection mingle with our admiration. Even after death had placed the last seal on his misery, we see him devoting to the cause of the human mind all the strength and energy which love and sorrow had spared. He lived the apostle of literature;—he fell its martyr:—he was found dead with his head reclined on a book.

Those who have studied the life and writings of Petrarch

with attention, will perhaps be inclined to make some deductions from this panegyric. It cannot be denied that his merits were disfigured by a most unpleasant affectation. His zeal for literature communicated a tinge of pedantry to all his feelings and opinions. His love was the love of a sonneteer:—his patriotism was the patriotism of an antiquarian. The interest with which we contemplate the works, and study the history, of those who, in former ages, have occupied our country, arises from the associations which connect them with the community in which are comprised all the objects of our affection and our hope. In the mind of Petrarch these feelings were reversed. He loved Italy, because it abounded with the monuments of the ancient masters of the world. His native city—the fair and glorious Florence—the modern Athens, then in all the bloom and strength of its youth, could not obtain, from the most distinguished of its citizens, any portion of that passionate homage which he paid to the decrepitude of Rome. These and many other blemishes, though they must in candor be acknowledged, can but in a very slight degree diminish the glory of his career. For my own part, I look upon it with so much fondness and pleasure that I feel reluctant to turn from it to the consideration of his works, which I by no means contemplate with equal admiration.

Nevertheless, I think highly of the poetical powers of Petrarch. He did not possess, indeed, the art of strongly presenting sensible objects to the imagination;—and this is the more remarkable, because the talent of which I speak is that which peculiarly distinguishes the Italian poets. In the Divine Comedy it is displayed in its highest perfection. It characterizes almost every celebrated poem in the language. Perhaps this is to be attributed to the circumstance that painting and sculpture had attained a high degree of excellence in Italy before poetry had been extensively cultivated. Men were debarred from books, but accustomed from childhood to contemplate the admirable works of art, which, even in the thirteenth century, Italy began to produce. Hence their imaginations received so strong a bias that, even in their writings, a taste for graphic delineation is discernible. The progress of things in England has been in all respects different. The consequence is, that English historical pictures are poems on canvas; while Italian poems are pictures painted to the mind by means of words. Of this national characteristic the writings of Petrarch are almost totally

destitute. His sonnets indeed, from their subject and nature, and his Latin poems, from the restraints which always shackle one who writes in a dead language, cannot fairly be received in evidence. But his Triumphs absolutely required the exercise of this talent, and exhibit no indications of it.

Genius, however, he certainly possessed, and genius of a high order. His ardent, tender, and magnificent turn of thought, his brilliant fancy, his command of expression, at once forcible and elegant, must be acknowledged. Nature meant him for the prince of lyric writers. But by one fatal present she deprived her other gifts of half their value. He would have been a much greater poet had he been a less clever man. His ingenuity was the bane of his mind. He abandoned the noble and natural style, in which he might have excelled, for the conceits which he produced with a facility at once admirable and disgusting. His muse, like the Roman lady in Livy, was tempted by gaudy ornaments to betray the fastnesses of her strength, and, like her, was crushed beneath the glittering bribes which had seduced her.

The paucity of his thoughts is very remarkable. It is impossible to look without amazement on a mind so fertile in combinations, yet so barren of images. His amatory poetry is wholly made up of a very few topics, disposed in so many orders, and exhibited in so many lights, that it reminds us of those arithmetical problems about permutations, which so much astonish the unlearned. The French cook, who boasted that he could make fifteen different dishes out of a nettle-top, was not a greater master of his art. The mind of Petrarch was a kaleidoscope. At every turn it presents us with new forms, always fantastic, occasionally beautiful; and we can scarcely believe that all these varieties have been produced by the same worthless fragments of glass. The sameness of his images is, indeed, in some degree, to be attributed to the sameness of his subject. It would be unreasonable to expect perpetual variety from so many hundred compositions, all of the same length, all in the same measure, and all addressed to the same insipid and heartless coquette. I cannot but suspect also that the perverted taste, which is the blemish of his amatory verses, was to be attributed to the influence of Laura, who probably, like most critics of her sex, preferred a gaudy to a majestic style. Be this as it may, he no sooner changes his subject than he changes his manner. When he speaks of the wrongs and degradation of Italy, devastated by foreign invaders, and but feebly

defended by her pusillanimous children, the effeminate lisp of the sonneteer is exchanged for a cry, wild and solemn, and piercing as that which proclaimed "Sleep no more" to the bloody house of Cawdor. "Italy seems not to feel her sufferings," exclaims her impassioned poet; "decrepit, sluggish, and languid, will she sleep forever? Will there be none to awake her? Oh that I had my hands twisted in her hair!"*

Nor is it with less energy that he denounces against the Mahometan Babylon the vengeance of Europe and of Christ. His magnificent enumeration of the ancient exploits of the Greeks must always excite admiration, and cannot be perused without the deepest interest, at a time when the wise and good, bitterly disappointed in so many other countries, are looking with breathless anxiety towards the natal land of liberty,—the field of Marathon,—and the deadly pass where the Lion of Lacedæmon turned to bay.†

His poems on religious subjects also deserve the highest commendation. At the head of these must be placed the Ode to the Virgin. It is, perhaps, the finest hymn in the world. His devout veneration receives an exquisitely poetical character from the delicate perception of the sex and the loveliness of his idol, which we may easily trace throughout the whole composition.

I could dwell with pleasure on these and similar parts of the writings of Petrarch; but I must return to his amatory poetry: to that he entrusted his fame; and to that he has principally owed it.

The prevailing defect of his best compositions on this subject is the universal brilliancy with which they are lighted up. The natural language of the passions is, indeed, often figurative and fantastic; and with none is this more the case than with that of love. Still there is a limit. The feelings should, indeed, have their ornamental garb; but, like an elegant woman, they should be neither muffled nor exposed. The drapery should be so arranged, as at once to answer the purposes of modest concealment and judicious display. The decorations should sometimes be employed to hide a defect, and sometimes to heighten a beauty; but never to conceal, much less to distort, the charms to which they are subsidi-

* Che suoi guai non par che senta;
Vecchia, oziosa, e lenta.
Dormirà sempre, e non fia chi la svegli?
Leman l' avess' io avvolte entro e capegli.—Canzone xi.
Maratona, e le mortali strette
Che difese il LEON con poca gente.—Canzone v.

ary. The love of Petrarch, on the contrary, arrays itself like a foppish savage, whose nose is bored with a golden ring, whose skin is painted with grotesque forms and dazzling colors, and whose ears are drawn down his shoulders by the weight of jewels. It is a rule, without any exception, in all kinds of composition, that the principal idea, the predominant feeling, should never be confounded with the accompanying decorations. It should generally be distinguished from them by greater simplicity of expression; as we recognize Napoleon in the pictures of his battles, amidst a crowd of embroidered coats and plumes, by his gray cloak and his hat without a feather. In the verses of Petrarch it is generally impossible to say what thought is meant to be prominent. All is equally elaborate. The chief wears the same gorgeous and degrading livery with his retinue, and obtains only his share of the indifferent stare which we bestow upon them in common. The poems have no strong lights and shades, no background, no foreground;—they are like the illuminated figures in an oriental manuscript,—plenty of rich tints and no perspective. Such are the faults of the most celebrated of these compositions. Of those which are universally acknowledged to be bad it is scarcely possible to speak with patience. Yet they have much in common with their splendid companions. They differ from them, as a May-day procession of chimney-sweepers differs from the Field of Cloth of Gold. They have the gaudiness but not the wealth. His muse belongs to that numerous class of females who have no objection to be dirty, while they can be tawdry. When his brilliant conceits are exhausted, he supplies their place with metaphysical quibbles, forced antitheses, bad puns, and execrable charades. In his fifth sonnet he may, I think, be said to have sounded the lowest chasm of the Bathos. Upon the whole, that piece may be safely pronounced to be the worst attempt at poetry, and the worst attempt at wit, in the world.

A strong proof of the truth of these criticisms is, that almost all the sonnets produce exactly the same effect on the mind of the reader. They relate to all the various moods of a lover, from joy to despair:—yet they are perused, as far as my experience and observation have gone, with exactly the same feeling. The fact is, that in none of them are the passion and the ingenuity mixed in just proportions. There is not enough sentiment to dilute the condiments which are employed to season it. The repast which he sets before us

resembles the Spanish entertainment in Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, at which the relish of all the dishes and sauces was overpowered by the common flavor of spice. Fish, flesh, fowl,—every thing at table tasted of nothing but red pepper.

The writings of Petrarch may indeed suffer undeservedly from one cause to which I must allude. His imitators have so much familiarized the ear of Italy and of Europe to the favorite topics of amorous flattery and lamentation, that we can scarcely think them original when we find them in the first author; and, even when our understandings have convinced us that they were new to him, they are still old to us. This has been the fate of many of the finest passages of the most eminent writers. It is melancholy to trace a noble thought from stage to stage of its profanation: to see it transferred from the first illustrious wearer to his lacqueys, turned, and turned again, and at last hung on a scare-crow. Petrarch has really suffered much from this cause. Yet that he should have so suffered is a sufficient proof that his excellences were not of the highest order. A line may be stolen; but the pervading spirit of a great poet is not to be surreptitiously obtained by a plagiarist. The continued imitation of twenty-five centuries has left Homer as it found him. If every simile and every turn of Dante had been copied ten thousand times, the Divine Comedy would have retained all its freshness. It was easy for the porter in Farquhar to pass for Beau Clincher, by borrowing his lace and his pulvilio. It would have been more difficult to enact Sir Harry Wildair.

Before I quit this subject I must defend Petrarch from one accusation, which is in the present day frequently brought against him. His sonnets are pronounced by a large sect of critics not to possess certain qualities which they maintain to be indispensable to sonnets, with as much confidence, and as much reason, as their prototypes of old insisted on the unities of the drama. I am an exoteric—utterly unable to explain the mysteries of this new poetical faith. I only know that it is a faith, which except a man do keep pure and undefiled, without doubt he shall be called a blockhead. I cannot, however, refrain from asking what is the particular virtue which belongs to fourteen as distinguished from all other numbers. Does it arise from its being a multiple of seven? Has this principle any reference to the sabbatical ordinance? Or is it to the order of rhymes that these singular properties are attached? Unhappily the sonnets of Shak-

speare differ as much in this respect from those of Petrarch, as from a Spenserian or an octave stanza. Away with this unmeaning jargon! We have pulled down the old regime of criticism. I trust that we shall never tolerate the equally pedantic and irrational despotism, which some of the revolutionary leaders would erect upon its ruins. We have not dethroned Aristotle and Bossu for this.

These sonnet-fanciers would do well to reflect that, though the style of Petrarch may not suit the standard of perfection which they have chosen, they lie under great obligations to these very poems,—that, but for Petrarch, the measure, concerning which they legislate so judiciously, would probably never have attracted notice;—and that to him they owe the pleasure of admiring, and the glory of composing, pieces, which seem to have been produced by Master Slender, with the assistance of his man Simple.

I cannot conclude these remarks without making a few observations on the Latin writings of Petrarch. It appears that, both by himself and by his contemporaries, these were far more highly valued than his compositions in the vernacular language. Posterity, the supreme court of literary appeal, has not only reversed the judgment, but, according to its general practice, reversed it with costs, and condemned the unfortunate works to pay, not only for their own inferiority, but also for the injustice of those who had given them an unmerited preference. And it must be owned that, without making large allowances for the circumstances under which they were produced, we cannot pronounce a very favorable judgment. They must be considered as exotics, transplanted to a foreign climate, and reared in an unfavorable situation; and it would be unreasonable to expect from them the health and the vigor which we find in the indigenous plants around them, or which they might themselves have possessed in their native soil. He has but very imperfectly imitated the style of the Latin authors, and has not compensated for the deficiency by enriching the ancient language with the graces of modern poetry. The splendor and ingenuity, which we admire, even when we condemn it, in his Italian works, is almost totally wanting, and only illuminates with rare and occasional glimpses the dreary obscurity of the Africa. The eclogues have more animation; but they can only be called poems by courtesy. They have nothing in common with his writings in his native language except the eternal pun about Laura and Daphne. None of

these works would have placed him on a level with Vida or Buchanan. Yet, when we compare him with those who preceded him, when we consider that he went on the forlorn hope of literature, that he was the first who perceived, and the first who attempted to revive, the finer elegancies of the ancient language of the world, we shall perhaps think more highly of him than of those who could never have surpassed his beauties if they had not inherited them.

He has aspired to emulate the philosophical eloquence of Cicero, as well as the poetical majesty of Virgil. His essay on the Remedies of Good and Evil Fortune is a singular work, in a colloquial form, and a most scholastic style. It seems to be framed upon the model of the Tusculan Questions,—with what success those who have read it may easily determine. It consists of a series of dialogues: in each of these a person is introduced who has experienced some happy or some adverse event: he gravely states his case; and a reasoner, or rather Reason personified, confutes him; a task not very difficult, since the disciple defends his position only by pertinaciously repeating it, in almost the same words, at the end of every argument of his antagonist. In this manner Petrarch solves an immense variety of cases. Indeed, I doubt whether it would be possible to name any pleasure or any calamity which does not find a place in this dissertation. He gives excellent advice to a man who is in expectation of discovering the philosopher's stone;—to another, who has formed a fine aviary;—to a third, who is delighted with the tricks of a favorite monkey. His lectures to the unfortunate are equally singular. He seems to imagine that a precedent in point is a sufficient consolation for every form of suffering. "Our town is taken," says one complainant; "So was Troy," replies his comforter. "My wife has eloped," says another; "If it has happened to you once, it happened to Menelaus twice." One poor fellow is in great distress at having discovered that his wife's son is none of his. "It is hard," says he, "that I should have had the expense of bringing up one who is indifferent to me." "You are a man," returns his monitor, quoting the famous line of Terence; "and nothing that belongs to any other man ought to be indifferent to you." The physical calamities of life are not omitted; and there is in particular a disquisition on the advantages of having the itch, which, if not convincing, is certainly very amusing.

The invectives on an unfortunate physician, or rather

upon the medical science, have more spirit. Petrarch was thoroughly in earnest on this subject. And the bitterness of his feelings occasionally produces, in the midst of his classical and scholastic pedantry, a sentence worthy of the second Philippic. Swift himself might have envied the chapter on the causes of the paleness of physicians.

Of his Latin works the Epistles are the most generally known and admired. As compositions they are certainly superior to his essays. But their excellence is only comparative. From so large a collection of letters, written by so eminent a man, during so varied and eventful a life, we should have expected a complete and spirited view of the literature, the manners, and the politics of the age. A traveller—a poet—a scholar—a lover—a courtier—a recluse—he might have perpetuated, in an imperishable record, the form and pressure of the age and body of the time. Those who read his correspondence, in the hope of finding such information as this, will be utterly disappointed. It contains nothing characteristic of the period or of the individual. It is a series, not of letters, but of themes; and, as it is not generally known, might be very safely employed at public schools as a magazine of common-places. Whether he write on politics to the Emperor and the Doge, or send advice and consolation to a private friend, every line is crowded with examples and quotations, and sounds big with Anaxagoras and Scipio. Such was the interest excited by the character of Petrarch, and such the admiration which was felt for his epistolary style, that it was with difficulty that his letters reached the place of their destination. The poet describes, with pretended regret and real complacency, the importunity of the curious, who often opened, and sometimes stole, these favorite compositions. It is a remarkable fact that, of all his epistles, the least affected are those which are addressed to the dead and the unborn. Nothing can be more absurd than his whim of composing grave letters of expostulation and commendation to Cicero and Seneca; yet these strange performances are written in a far more natural manner than his communications to his living correspondents. But of all his Latin works the preference must be given to the Epistle to Posterity; a simple, noble, and pathetic composition, most honorable both to his taste and his heart. If we can make allowance for some of the affected humility of an author, we shall perhaps think that no literary man has left a more pleasing memorial of himself.

In conclusion, we may pronounce that the works of Petrarch were below both his genius and his celebrity; and that the circumstances under which he wrote were as adverse to the development of his powers as they were favorable to the extension of his fame

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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT LAWSUIT BETWEEN THE PARISHES OF ST. DENNIS AND ST. GEORGE IN THE WATER.

(*Knight's Quarterly Magazine, April*, 1824.)

PART I.

THE parish of St. Dennis is one of the most pleasant parts of the country in which it is situated. It is fertile, well wooded, well watered, and of an excellent air. For many generations the manor had been holden in tail-male by a worshipful family, who have always taken precedence of their neighbors at the races and the sessions.

In ancient times the affairs of this parish were administered by a Court-Baron, in which the freeholders were judges; and the rates were levied by select vestries of the inhabitant householders. But at length these good customs fell into disuse. The Lords of the Manor, indeed, still held courts for form's sake; but they or their stewards had the whole management of affairs. They demanded services, duties, and customs to which they had no just title. Nay, they would often bring actions against their neighbors for their own private advantage, and then send in the bill to the parish. No objection was made, during many years, to these proceedings, so that the rates became heavier and heavier; nor was any person exempted from these demands, except the footmen and gamekeepers of the squire and the rector of the parish. They indeed were never checked in any excess. They would come to an honest laborer's cottage, eat his pancakes, tuck his fowls into their pockets, and cane the poor man himself. If he went up to the great house to complain, it

was hard to get the speech of Sir Lewis; and, indeed, his only chance of being righted was to coax the squire's pretty housekeeper, who could do what she pleased with her master. If he ventured to intrude upon the Lord of the Manor without this precaution, he gained nothing by his pains. Sir Lewis, indeed, would at first receive him with a civil face; for, to give him his due, he could be a fine gentleman when he pleased. "Good-day, my friend," he would say, "what situation have you in my family?" "Bless your honor!" says the poor fellow, "I am not one of your honor's servants; I rent a small piece of ground, your honor." "Then, you dog," quoth the squire, "what do you mean by coming here? Has a gentleman nothing to do but to hear the complaints of clowns? Here! Philip, James, Dick, toss this fellow in a blanket; or duck him, and set him in the stocks to dry."

One of these precious Lords of the Manor enclosed a deer-park; and, in order to stock it, he seized all the pretty pet fawns that his tenants had brought up; without paying them a farthing, or asking their leave. It was a sad day for the parish of St. Dennis. Indeed, I do not believe that all his oppressive exactions and long bills enraged the poor tenants so much as this cruel measure.

Yet for a long time, in spite of all these inconveniences, St. Dennis's was a very pleasant place. The people could not refrain from capering if they heard the sound of a fiddle. And, if they were inclined to be riotous, Sir Lewis had only to send for Punch, or the dancing dogs, and all was quiet again. But this could not last for ever; they began to think more and more of their condition; and, at last, a club of foul-mouthed, good-for-nothing rascals was held at the sign of the Devil, for the purpose of abusing the squire and the parson. The doctor, to own the truth, was old and indolent, extremely fat and greedy. He had not preached a tolerable sermon for a long time. The squire was still worse; so that, partly by truth and partly by falsehood, the club set the whole parish against their superiors. The boys scrawled caricatures of the clergymen upon the church-door, and shot at the landlord with pop-guns as he rode a hunting. It was even whispered about that the Lord of the Manor had no right to his estate, and that, if he were compelled to produce the original title-deeds, it would be found that he only held the estate in trust for the inhabitants of the parish.

In the mean time the squire was pressed more and more for money. The parish could pay no more. The rector refused to lend a farthing. The Jews were clamorous for their money; and the landlord had no other resource than to call together the inhabitants of the parish, and to request their assistance. They now attacked him furiously about their grievances, and insisted that he should relinquish his oppressive powers. They insisted that his footmen should be kept in order, that the parson should pay his share of the rates, that the children of the parish should be allowed to fish in the trout-stream, and to gather blackberries in the hedges. They at last went so far as to demand that he should acknowledge that he held his estate only in trust for them. His distress compelled him to submit. They, in return, agreed to set him free from his pecuniary difficulties, and to suffer him to inhabit the manor-house; and only annoyed him from time to time by singing impudent ballads under his window.

The neighboring gentlefolks did not look on these proceedings with much complacency. It is true that Sir Lewis and his ancestors had plagued them with lawsuits, and affronted them at county-meetings. Still they preferred the insolence of a gentleman to that of the rabble, and felt some uneasiness lest the example should infect their own tenants.

A large party of them met at the house of Lord Cæsar Germain. Lord Cæsar was the proudest man in the county. His family was very ancient and illustrious, though not particularly opulent. He had invited most of his wealthy neighbors. There was Mrs. Kitty North, the relict of poor Squire Peter, respecting whom the coroner's jury had found a verdict of accidental death, but whose fate had nevertheless excited strange whispers in the neighborhood. There was Squire Don, the owner of the great West Indian property, who was not so rich as he had formerly been, but still retained his pride, and kept up his customary pomp; so that he had plenty of plate but no breeches. There was Squire Von Blunderbussen, who had succeeded to the estates of his uncle, old Colonel Frederic Von Blunderbussen, of the hussars. The colonel was a very singular old fellow; he used to learn a page of Chambaud's grammar, and to translate Télémaque, every morning, and he kept six French masters to teach him to parleyvoo. Nevertheless, he was a shrewd clever man, and improved his

estate with so much care, sometimes by honest and sometimes by dishonest means, that he left a very pretty property to his nephew.

Lord Cæsar poured out a glass of Tokay for Mrs. Kitty. "Your health, my dear madam, I never saw you look more charming. Pray, what think you of these doings at St. Dennis's?"

"Fine doings! indeed!" interrupted Von Blunderbussen; "I wish that we had my old uncle alive, he would have had some of them up to the halberts. He knew how to use a cat-o'-nine-tails. If things go on in this way, a gentleman will not be able to horsewhip an impudent farmer, or to say a civil word to a milkmaid."

"Indeed, it's very true, Sir," said Mrs. Kitty; "their insolence is intolerable. Look at me, for instance:—a poor lone woman!—My dear Peter dead! I loved him:—so I did; and, when he died, I was so hysterical you cannot think. And now I cannot lean on the arm of a decent footman, or take a walk with a tall grenadier behind me, just to protect me from audacious vagabonds, but they must have their nauseous suspicions;—odious creatures!"—

"This must be stopped," replied Lord Cæsar. "We ought to contribute to support my poor brother-in-law against these rascals. I will write to Squire Guelf on this subject by this night's post. His name is always at the head of our county subscriptions."

If the people of St. Dennis's had been angry before, they were well-nigh mad when they heard of this conversation. The whole parish ran to the manor-house. Sir Lewis's Swiss porter shut the door against them; but they broke in and knocked him on the head for his impudence. They then seized the squire, hooted at him, pelted him, ducked him, and carried him to the watch-house. They turned the rector into the street, burnt his wig and band, and sold the church-plate by auction. They put up a painted Jezebel in the pulpit to preach. They scratched out the texts which were written round the church, and scribbled profane scraps of songs and plays in their place. They set the organ playing to pot-house tunes. Instead of being decently asked in church, they were married over a broom-stick. But, of all their whims, the use of the new patent steel-traps was the most remarkable.

This trap was constructed on a completely new principle. It consisted of a cleaver hung in a frame like a window;

when any poor wretch got in, down it came with a tremendous din, and took off his head in a twinkling. They got the squire into one of these machines. In order to prevent any of his partisans from getting footing in the parish, they placed traps at every corner. It was impossible to walk through the highway at broad noon without tumbling into one or other of them. No man could go about his business in security. Yet so great was the hatred which the inhabitants entertained for the old family, that a few decent honest people, who begged them to take down the steel-traps, and to put up humane man-traps in their room, were very roughly handled for their good-nature.

In the mean time the neighboring gentry undertook a suit against the parish on the behalf of Sir Lewis's heir, and applied to Squire Guelf for his assistance.

Everybody knows that Squire Guelf is more closely tied up than any gentleman in the shire. He could, therefore, lend them no help; but he referred them to the Vestry of the Parish of St. George in the Water. These good people had long borne a grudge against their neighbors on the other side of the stream; and some mutual trespasses had lately occurred which increased their hostility.

There was an honest Irishman, a great favorite among them, who used to entertain them with raree-shows, and to exhibit a magic lantern to the children on winter evenings. He had gone quite mad upon this subject. Sometimes he would call out in the middle of the street—"Take care of that corner, neighbors; for the love of Heaven, keep clear of that post, there is a patent steel-trap concealed thereabouts." Sometimes he would be disturbed by frightful dreams; then he would get up at dead of night, open his window and cry "fire," till the parish was roused, and the engines sent out. The pulpit of the Parish of St. George seemed likely to fall; I believe that the only reason was that the parson had grown too fat and heavy; but nothing would persuade this honest man but that it was a scheme of the people at St. Dennis's, and that they had sawed through the pillars in order to break the rector's neck. Once he went about with a knife in his pocket, and told all the persons whom he met that it had been sharpened by the knife-grinder of the next parish to cut their throats. These extravagancies had a great effect on the people; and the more so because they were espoused by Squire Guelf's steward, who was the most influential person in the parish.

He was a very fair-spoken man, very attentive to the main chance, and the idol of the old women, because he never played at skittles or danced with the girls; and, indeed, never took any recreation but that of drinking on Saturday nights with his friend Harry, the Scotch pedler. His supporters called him Sweet William; his enemies the Bottomless Pit.

The people of St. Dennis's, however, had their advocates. There was Frank, the richest farmer in the parish, whose great-grandfather had been knocked on the head many years before, in a squabble between the parish and a former landlord. There was Dick, the merry-andrew, rather light-fingered and riotous, but a clever droll fellow. Above all, there was Charley, the publican, a jolly, fat, honest lad, a great favorite with the women, who, if he had not been rather too fond of ale and chuck-farthing, would have been the best fellow in the neighborhood.

"My boys," said Charley, "this is exceedingly well for Madam North;—not that I would speak uncivilly of her; she put up my picture in her best room, bless her for it! But, I say, this is very well for her, and for Lord Cæsar, and Squire Don, and Colonel Von;—but what affair is it of yours or mine? It is not to be wondered at, that gentlemen should wish to keep poor people out of their own. But it is strange, indeed, that they should expect the poor themselves to combine against their own interests. If the folks at St. Dennis's should attack us we have the law and our cudgels to protect us. But why, in the name of wonder, are we to attack them? When old Sir Charles, who was Lord of the Manor formerly, and the parson, who was presented by him to the living, tried to bully the vestry, did not we knock their heads together, and go to meeting to hear Jeremiah Ringletub preach? And did the Squire Don, or the great Sir Lewis, that lived at that time, or the Germains, say a word against us for it? Mind your own business, my lads: law is not to be had for nothing; and we, you may be sure, shall have to pay the whole bill."

Nevertheless the people of St. George's were resolved on law. They cried out most lustily, "Squire Guelf for ever! Sweet William for ever! No steel traps!" Squire Guelf took all the rascally footmen who had worn old Sir Lewis's livery into his service. They were fed in the kitchen on the very best of every thing, though they had no settlement. Many people, and paupers in particular,

grumbled at these proceedings. The steward, however, devised a way to keep them quiet.

There had lived in this parish for many years an old gentleman, named Sir Habeas Corpus. He was said by some to be of Saxon, by some of Norman, extraction. Some maintained that he was not born till after the time of Sir Charles, to whom we have before alluded. Others are of opinion that he was a legitimate son of old Lady Magna Charta, although he was long concealed and kept out of his birthright. Certain it is that he was a very benevolent person. Whenever any poor fellow was taken up on grounds which he thought insufficient, he used to attend on his behalf and bail him; and thus he had become so popular, that to take direct measures against him was out of the question.

The steward, accordingly, brought a dozen physicians to examine Sir Habeas. After consultation, they reported that he was in a very bad way, and ought not, on any account, to be allowed to stir out for several months. Fortified with this authority, the parish officers put him to bed, closed his windows, and barred his doors. They paid him every attention, and from time to time issued bulletins of his health. The steward never spoke of him without declaring that he was the best gentleman in the world; but excellent care was taken that he should never stir out of doors.

When this obstacle was removed, the Squire and the steward kept the parish in excellent order; flogged this man, sent that man to the stocks, and pushed forward the lawsuit with a noble disregard of expense. They were, however, wanting either in skill or in fortune. And every thing went against them after their antagonists had begun to employ Solicitor Nap.

Who does not know the name of Solicitor Nap? At what alehouse is not his behavior discussed? In what printshop is not his picture seen? Yet how little truth has been said about him! Some people hold that he used to give laudanum by pints to his sick clerks for his amusement. Others, whose number has very much increased since he was killed by the gaol distemper, conceive that he was the very model of honor and good-nature. I shall try to tell the truth about him.

He was assuredly an excellent solicitor. In his way he never was surpassed. As soon as the parish began to employ him, their cause took a turn. In a very little time they were successful; and Nap became rich. He now set up for

a gentleman; took possession of the old manor-house; got into the commission of the peace, and affected to be on a par with the best of the country. He governed the vestries as absolutely as the old family had done. Yet, to give him his due, he managed things with far more discretion than either Sir Lewis or the rioters who had pulled the Lords of the Manor down. He kept his servants in tolerable order. He removed the steel traps from the highways and the corners of the streets. He still left a few indeed in the more exposed parts of his premises; and set up a board announcing that traps and spring guns were set in his grounds. He brought the poor parson back to the parish; and, though he did not enable him to keep a fine house and a coach as formerly, he settled him in a snug little cottage, and allowed him a pleasant pad-nag. He whitewashed the church again; and put the stocks, which had be - much wanted of late, into good repair.

With the neighboring gentry, however, he was no favorite. He was crafty and litigious. He cared nothing for right, if he could raise a point of law against them. He pounded their cattle, broke their hedges, and seduced their tenants from them. He almost ruined Lord Cæsar with actions, in every one of which he was successful. Von Blunderbusen went to law with him for an alleged trespass, but was cast, and almost ruined by the costs of suit. He next took a fancy to the seat of Squire Don, who was, to say the truth, little better than an idiot. He asked the poor dupe to dinner, and then threatened to have him tossed in a blanket unless he would make over his estates to him. The poor Squire signed and sealed a deed by which the property was assigned to Joe, a brother of Nap's, in trust for and to the use of Nap himself. The tenants, however, stood out. They maintained that the estate was entailed, and refused to pay rents to the new landlord; and in this refusal they were stoutly supported by the people in St. George's.

About the same time Nap took it into his head to match with quality, and nothing would serve him but one of the Miss Germains. Lord Cæsar swore like a trooper; but there was no help for it. Nap had twice put executions in his principal residence, and had refused to discharge the latter of the two, till he had extorted a bond from his Lordship, which compelled him to comply.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, INSCRIPTIONS, ETC.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

EPITAPH ON HENRY MARTYN.

(1812.)

HERE Martyn lies. In Manhood's early bloom
The Christian Hero finds a Pagan tomb.
Religion, sorrowing o'er her favorite son,
Points to the glorious trophies that he won.
Eternal trophies! not with carnage red,
Not stained with tears by hapless captives shed,
But trophies of the cross! for that dear name,
Through every form of danger, death, and shame,
Onward he journeyed to a happier shore,
Where danger, death, and shame assault no more.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF PITT.

(1813.)

O Britain! dear Isle, when the annals of story
Shall tell of the deeds that thy children have done,
When the strains of each poet shall sing of their glory,
And the triumphs their skill and their valor have won·

When the olive and palm in thy chaplet are blended,
When thy arts, and thy fame, and thy commerce increase,
When thy arms through the uttermost coasts are extended,
And thy war is triumphant, and happy thy peace;

When the ocean, whose waves like a rampart flow round thee,
Conveying thy mandates to every shore,
And the empire of nature no longer can bound thee,
And the world be the scene of thy conquests no more:

Remember the man who in sorrow and danger,
When thy glory was set, and thy spirit was low,
When thy hopes were o'erturned by the arms of the stranger,
And thy banners displayed in the halls of the foe.

Stood forth in the tempest of doubt and disaster,
Unaided and single the danger to brave,
Asserted thy claims, and the rights of his master,
Preserved thee to conquer, and saved thee to save.

A RADICAL WAR-SONG.

(1820.)

Awake, arise, the hour is come,
For rows and revolutions;
There's no receipt like pike and drum
For crazy constitutions.
Close, close the shop! Break, break the loom
Desert your hearths and furrows,
And throng in arms to seal the doom
Of England's rotten boroughs.

We'll stretch that tort'ring Castlereagh
On his own Dublin rack, sir;
We'll drown the King in Eau de vie,
The Laureate in his sack, sir;
Old Eldon and his sordid hag
In molten gold we'll smother,
And stifle in his own green bag
The Doctor and his brother.

In chains we'll hang in fair Guildhall
The City's famed Recorder,
And next on proud St. Stephen's fall,
Though Wynne should squeak to order.
In vain our tyrants then shall try
To 'scape our martial law, sir;
In vain the trembling Speaker cry
That "Strangers must withdraw," sir.

Copley to hang offends no text;
A rat is not a man, sir:
With schedules and with tax bills next
We'll bury pious Van, sir.
The slaves who loved the Income Tax,
We'll crush by scores, like mites, sir,
And him, the wretch who freed the blacks,
And more enslaved the whites, sir.

The peer shall dangle from his gate,
The bishop from his steeple,
Till all recanting, own, the State
Means nothing but the People.
We'll fix the church's revenues
On Apostolic basis,
One coat, one scrip, one pair of shoes
Shall pay their strange grimaces.

We'll strap the bar's deluding train
In their own darling halter,
And with his big church bible brain
The parson at the altar.
Hail glorious hour, when fair Reform
Shall bless our longing nation,
And Hunt receives command to form
A new administration.

Carlisle shall sit enthroned, where sat
Our Cranmer, and our Secker;
And Watson show his snow-white hat
In England's rich Exchequer.
The breast of Thistlewood shall wear
Our Wellesley's star and sash, man;
And many a mausoleum fair
Shall rise to honest Cashman.

Then, then beneath the nine-tailed cat
Shall they who used it writhe, sir;
And curates lean, and rectors fat,
Shall dig the ground they tithe, sir.
Down with your Bayleys, and your Bests,
Your Giffords and your Gurneys:
We'll clear the island of the pests,
Which mortals name attorneys.

Down with your sheriffs, and your mayors,
Your registrars, and proctors,
We'll live without the lawyer's cares,
And die without the doctor's.
No discontented fair shall pout
To see her spouse so stupid;
We'll tread the torch of Hymen out,
And live content with Cupid.

Then, when the high-born and the great
Are humbled to our level,
On all the wealth of Church and State,
Like aldermen, we'll revel.
We'll live when hushed the battle's din,
In smoking and in cards, sir,
In drinking unexcised gin,
And wooing fair Poissardes, sir.

THE BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR

(1824.)

Oh! weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the hour
When the children of darkness and evil had power,
When the horsemen of Valois triumphantly trod
On the bosoms that bled for their rights and their God.

Oh! weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the slain,
Who for faith and for freedom lay slaughtered in vain
Oh, weep for the living, who linger to bear
The renegade's shame, or the exile's despair.

One look, one last look, to our cots and our towers,
To the rows of our vines, and the beds of our flowers,
To the church where the bones of our fathers decayed,
Where we fondly had deemed that our own would be laid.

Alas! we must leave thee, dear desolate home,
To the spearmen of Uri, the shavelings of Rome,
To the serpent of Florence, the vulture of Spain,
To the pride of Anjou, and the guile of Lorraine.

Farewell to thy fountains, farewell to thy shades,
To the song of thy youths, and the dance of thy maids
To the breath of thy gardens, the hum of thy bees,
And the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees.

Farewell, and for ever. The priest and the slave
May rule in the halls of the free and the brave.
Our hearths we abandon; our lands we resign;
But, Father, we kneel to no altar but thine.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY,

BY OBADIAH BIND-THEIR-KINGS-IN-CHAINS-AND-THEIR-NOBLES WITH-LINKS-OF-IRON, SERGEANT IN IRETON'S REGIMENT.

(1824.)

Oh! wherefore come ye forth, in triumph from the North,
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread?

Oh evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sate in the high places, and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance, and cuirasses shine,
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The General rode along us to form us to the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swell'd into a shout,
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line!
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia, and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp your pikes, close your ranks;
For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall.

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are gone!
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound; the centre hath given ground:
Hark! hark!—What means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys.
Bear up another minute: brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar;
And he—he turns, he flies:—shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war.

Ho! comrades, scour the plain; and, ere ye strip the slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure,
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts were gay and bold,
When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans to-day;
And to-morrow shall the fox, from her chambers in the rocks,
Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl above the prey.

Where be your tongues that late mocked at heaven and hell and fate,
And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades,
Your perfum'd satin clothes, your catches and your oaths,
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades?

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the crown,
With the Belial of the court, and the Mammon of the Pope;
There is woe in Oxford Halls: there is wail in Durham's Stalls:
The Jesuit smites his bosom: the Bishop rends his cope.

And she of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword;
And the Kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word.

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

(1825.)

Let pious Damon take his seat,
With mincing step, and languid smile,
And scatter from his 'kerchief sweet,
Sabæan odors o'er the aisle;
And spread his little jewelled hand,
And smile round all the parish beauties,
And pat his curls, and smooth his band,
Meet prelude to his saintly duties.

Let the thronged audience press and stare,
  Let stifled maidens ply the fan,
Admire his doctrines, and his hair,
  And whisper "What a good young man!"
While he explains what seems most clear,
  So clearly that it seems perplexed,
I'll stay, and read my sermon here;
  And skulls, and bones, shall be the text.

Art thou the jilted dupe of fame?
  Dost thou with jealous anger pine
Whene'er she sounds some other name,
  With fonder emphasis than thine?
To thee I preach; draw near; attend!
  Look on these bones, thou fool, and see
Where all her scorns and favors end,
  What Byron is, and thou must be.

Dost thou revere, or praise, or trust,
  Some clod like those that here we spurn;
Some thing that sprang like thee from dust,
  And shall like thee to dust return?
Dost thou rate statesmen, heroes, wits,
  At one sear leaf, or wandering feather?
Behold the black, damp, narrow pits,
  Where they and thou must lie together.

Dost thou beneath the smile or frown
  Of some vain woman bend thy knee?
Here take thy stand, and trample down
  Things that were once as fair as she.
Here rave of her ten thousand graces,
  Bosom, and lip, and eye, and chin,
While, as in scorn, the fleshless faces
  Of Hamiltons and Waldegraves grin.

Whate'er thy losses or thy gains,
  Whate'er thy projects or thy fears,
Whate'er the joys, whate'er the pains,
  That prompt thy baby smiles and tears;
Come to my school, and thou shalt learn,
  In one short hour of placid thought,
A stoicism, more deep, more stern,
  Than ever Zeno's porch hath taught.

The plots and feats of those that press
To seize on titles, wealth, or power,
Shall seem to thee a game of chess,
Devised to pass a tedious hour.
What matters it to him who fights
For shows of unsubstantial good,
Whether his Kings, and Queens, and Knights,
Be things of flesh, or things of wood?

We check, and take; exult, and fret;
Our plans extend, our passions rise,
Till in our ardor we forget
How worthless is the victor's prize.
Soon fades the spell, soon comes the night:
Say will it not be then the same,
Whether we played the black or white,
Whether we lost or won the game?

Dost thou among these hillocks stray,
O'er some dear idol's tomb to moan?
Know that thy foot is on the clay
Of hearts once wretched as thy own.
How many a father's anxious schemes,
How many rapturous thoughts of lovers,
How many a mother's cherished dreams,
The swelling turf before thee covers!

Here for the living and the dead,
The weepers and the friends they weep,
Hath been ordained the same cold bed,
The same dark night, the same long sleep;
Why shouldest thou writhe, and sob, and rave
O'er those, with whom thou soon must be?
Death his own sting shall cure—the grave
Shall vanquish its own victory.

Here learn that all the griefs and joys,
Which now torment, which now beguile,
Are children's hurts, are children's toys,
Scarce worthy of one bitter smile,
Here learn that pulpit, throne, and press,
Sword, sceptre, lyre, alike are frail,
That science is a blind man's guess,
And History a nurse's tale.

Here learn that glory and disgrace,
Wisdom and folly, pass away,
That mirth hath its appointed space,
That sorrow is but for a day;
That all we love, and all we hate,
That all we hope, and all we fear,
Each mood of mind, each turn of fate,
Must end in dust and silence here.

TRANSLATION FROM A. V. ARNAULT.

Fables : Livre v., Fable 16 (1826.)

Thou, poor leaf, so sear and frail,
Sport of every wanton gale,
Whence, and whither, dost thou fly,
Through this bleak autumnal sky?
On a noble oak I grew,
Green, and broad, and fair to view;
But the Monarch of the shade,
By the tempest low was laid.
From that time, I wander o'er
Wood, and valley, hill, and moor,
Wheresoe'er the wind is blowing,
Nothing caring, nothing knowing?
Thither go I, whither goes,
Glory's laurel, Beauty's rose.

———De ta tige détachée,
Pauvre feuille desséchée
Où vas-tu?—Je n'en sais rien.
L'orage a frappé le chêne
Qui seul etait mon soutien.
De son inconstante haleine,
Le zéphyr ou l'aquilon
Depuis ce jour me promène
De la forêt à la plaine,
De la montagne au vallon.
Je vais où le vent me mène,
Sans me plaindre ou m'effrayer.
Je vais où va toute chose,
Où va la feuille de rose
Et la feuille de laurier.

DIES IRÆ.

(1826.)

On that great, that awful day,
This vain world shall pass away.
Thus the sibyl sang of old,
Thus hath Holy David told.
There shall be a deadly fear
When the Avenger shall appear,
And unveiled before his eye
All the works of man shall lie.
Hark! to the great trumpet's tones
Pealing o'er the place of bones:
Hark! it waketh from their bed
All the nations of the dead,—
In a countless throng to meet,
At the eternal judgment seat.
Nature sickens with dismay,
Death may not retain his prey;
And before the Maker stand
All the creatures of his hand.
The great book shall be unfurled,
Whereby God shall judge the world:
What was distant shall be near,
What was hidden shall be clear.
To what shelter shall I fly?
To what guardian shall I cry?
Oh, in that destroying hour,
Source of goodness, Source of power,
Show thou, of thine own free grace,
Help unto a helpless race.
Though I plead not at thy throne
Aught that I for thee have done,
Do not thou unmindful be,
Of what thou hast borne for me:
Of the wandering, of the scorn,
Of the scourge, and of the thorn.
Jesus, hast *thou* borne the pain,
And hath all been borne in vain?
Shall thy vengeance smite the head
For whose ransom thou hast bled?
Thou, whose dying blessing gave
Glory to a guilty slave:

Thou, who from the crew unclean
Did'st release the Magdalene:
Shall not mercy vast and free,
Evermore be found in thee?
Father, turn on me thine eyes,
See my blushes, hear my cries;
Faint though be the cries I make,
Save me, for thy mercy's sake,
From the worm, and from the fire,
From the torments of thine ire.
Fold me with the sheep that stand
Pure and safe at thy right hand.
Hear thy guilty child implore thee,
Rolling in the dust before thee.
Oh, the horrors of that day!
When this frame of sinful clay,
Starting from its burial place,
Must behold thee face to face.
Hear and pity, hear and aid,
Spare the creatures thou hast made.
Mercy, mercy, save, forgive,
Oh, who shall look on thee and live!

THE MARRIAGE OF TIRZAH AND AHIRAD.

GENESIS VI. 3.

(1827.)

It is the dead of night:
Yet more than noonday light
Beams far and wide from many a gorgeous hall.
Unnumbered harps are tinkling,
Unnumbered lamps are twinkling,
In the great city of the fourfold wall.
By the brazen castle's moat,
The sentry hums a livelier note.
The ship-boy chaunts a shriller lay
From the galleys in the bay.
Shout, and laugh, and hurrying feet
Sound from mart and square and street,
From the breezy laurel shades,
From the granite colonnades,

From the golden statue's base,
From the stately market-place,
Where, upreared by captive hands,
The great Tower of Triumph stands,
All its pillars in a blaze
With the many-colored rays,
Which lanthorns of ten thousand dyes
Shed on ten thousand panoplies.
  But closest is the throng,
  And loudest is the song,
In that sweet garden by the river's side,
  The abyss of myrtle bowers,
  The wilderness of flowers,
Where Cain hath built the palace of his pride.
  Such palace ne'er shall be again
  Among the dwindling race of men.
From all its threescore gates, the light
  Of gold and steel afar was thrown;
Two hundred cubits rose in height
  The outer wall of polished stone.
  On the top was ample space
  For a gallant chariot race.
  Near other parapet a bed
  Of the richest mould was spread,
Where amidst flowers of every scent and hue
Rich orange trees, and palms, and giant cedars grew.

  In the mansion's public court
  All is revel, song, and sport;
For there, till morn shall tint the east,
Menials and guards prolong the feast.
The boards with painted vessels shine;
The marble cisterns foam with wine.
A hundred dancing girls are there
With zoneless waists and streaming hair;
And countless eyes with ardor gaze,
  And countless hands the measure beat,
As mix and part in amorous maze
  Those floating arms and bounding feet.
But none of all the race of Cain,
  Save those whom he hath deigned to grace
With yellow robe and sapphire chain,
  May pass beyond that outer space.

For now within the painted hall
The Firstborn keeps high festival.
Before the glittering valves all night
Their post the chosen captains hold.
Above the portal's stately height
The legend flames in lamps of gold:
"In life united and in death
"May Tirzah and Ahirad be,
"The bravest he of all the sons of Seth,
"Of all the house of Cain the loveliest she."

Through all the climates of the earth
This night is given to festal mirth.
The long continued war is ended.
The long divided lines are blended.
Ahirad's bow shall now no more
Make fat the wolves with kindred gore.
The vultures shall expect in vain
Their banquet from the sword of Cain.
Without a guard the herds and flocks
Along the frontier moors and rocks
From eve to morn may roam;
Nor shriek, nor shout, nor reddened sky,
Shall warn the startled hind to fly
From his beloved home.
Nor to the pier shall burghers crowd
With straining necks and faces pale,
And think that in each flitting cloud
They see a hostile sail.
The peasant without fear shall guide
Down smooth canal or river wide
His painted bark of cane,
Fraught, for some proud bazaar's arcades,
With chestnuts from his native shades,
And wine, and milk, and grain.
Search round the peopled globe to-night,
Explore each continent and isle,
There is no door without a light,
No face without a smile.
The noblest chiefs of either race,
From north and south, from west and east,
Crowd to the painted hall to grace
The pomp of that atoning feast.

With widening eyes and laboring breath
Stand the fair-haired sons of Seth,
As bursts upon their dazzled sight
The endless avenue of light,
The bowers of tulip, rose, and palm,
The thousand cressets fed with balm,
The silken vests, the boards piled high
With amber, gold, and ivory,
The crystal founts whence sparkling flow
The richest wines o'er beds of snow,
The walls where blaze in living dyes
The king's three hundred victories.
The heralds point the fitting seat
To every guest in order meet,
And place the highest in degree
Nearest th' imperial canopy.
Beneath its broad and gorgeous fold,
With naked swords and shields of gold,
Stood the seven princes of the tribes of Nod.
Upon an ermine carpet lay
Two tiger cubs in furious play,
Beneath the emerald throne where sat the signed of God.

Over that ample forehead white
The thousandth year returneth.
Still, on its commanding height,
With a fierce and blood-red light,
The fiery token burneth.
Wheresoe'er that mystic star
Blazeth in the van of war,
Back recoil before its ray
Shield and banner, bow and spear,
Maddened horses break away
From the trembling charioteer.
The fear of that stern king doth lie
On all that live beneath the sky;
All shrink before the mark of his despair,
The seal of that great curse which he alone can bear.

Blazing in pearls and diamonds' sheen,
Tirzah, the young Ahirad's bride,
Of humankind the destined queen,
Sits by her great forefather's side.

The jetty curls, the forehead high,
The swanlike neck, the eagle face,
The glowing cheek, the rich dark eye,
Proclaim her of the elder race.
With flowing locks of auburn hue,
And features smooth, and eye of blue,
Timid in love as brave in arms,
The gentle heir of Seth askance
Snatches a bashful, ardent glance
At her majestic charms;
Blest, when across that brow high musing flashes
A deeper tint of rose,
Thrice blest, when from beneath the silken lashes
Of her proud eye she throws
The smile of blended fondness and disdain
Which marks the daughters of the house of Cain.

All hearts are light around the hall
Save his who is the lord of all.
The painted roofs, the attendant train,
The lights, the banquet, all are vain.
He sees them not. His fancy strays
To other scenes and other days.
A cot[illegible]y lone forest's edge,
A fountain murmuring through the trees,
A garden with wild-flower hedge,
Whence sounds the music of the bees,
A little flock of sheep at rest
Upon a mountain swarthy breast.
On his rude spade he seems to lean
Beside the well-remembered stone,
Rejoicing [illegible]er the promise green
Of the first harvest man hath sown.
He sees his mother's tears;
His father's voice he hears,
Kind as when first it praised his youthful skill
And soon a seraph-child,
In boyish rapture wild,
With a light crook comes bounding from the hill,
Kisses his hands, and strokes his face,
And nestles close in his embrace.
In his adamantine eye
None might discern his agony;
But they who had grown hoary next his side,
And read his stern dark face with deepest skill,

Could trace strange meanings in that lip of pride,
Which for one moment quivered and was still.
No time for them to mark or him to feel
Those inward stings; for clarion, flute, and lyre,
And the rich voices of a countless quire,
Burst on the ear in one triumphant peal.
In breathless transport sits the admiring throng,
As sink and swell the notes of Jubal's lofty song.

"Sound the timbrel, strike the lyre,
Wake the trumpet's blast of fire,
Till the gilded arches ring.
Empire, victory, and fame,
Be ascribed unto the name
Of our father and our king.
Of the deeds which he hath done,
Of the spoils which he hath won,
Let us grateful children sing.

"When the deadly fight was fought,
When the great revenge was wrought,
When on the slaughtered victims lay
The minion stiff and cold as they,
Doomed to exile, sealed with flame,
From the west the wanderer came.
Six score years and six he strayed
A hunter through the forest shade.
The lion's shaggy jaws he tore,
To earth he smote the foaming boar,
He crushed the dragon's fiery crest,
And scaled the condor's dizzy nest;
Till hardy sons and daughters fair
Increased around his woodland lair.
Then his victorious bow unstrung
On the great bison's horn he hung.

Giraffe and elk he left to hold
The wilderness of bows in peace,
And trained his youth to pen the fold,
To press the cream, and weave the fleece.
As shrunk the streamlet in its bed,
As black and scant the herbage grew,
O'er endless plains his flocks he led
Still to new brooks and pastures new.

So strayed he till the white pavilions
Of his camp were told by millions,
Till his children's households seven
Were numerous as the stars of heaven.
Then he bade us rove no more;
And in the place that pleased him best,
On the great river's fertile shore,
He fixed the city of his rest.
He taught us then to bind the sheaves,
To strain the palm's delicious milk,
And from the dark green mulberry leaves
To cull the filmy silk.
Then first from straw-built mansions roamed
O'er flower-beds trim the skilful bees;
Then first the purple wine-vats foamed
Around the laughing peasant's knees;
And olive-yards, and orchards green,
O'er all the hills of Nod were seen.

Of our father and our king
Let us grateful children sing.
From him our race its being draws,
His are our arts, and his our laws.
Like himself he bade us be
Proud, and brave, and fierce and free.
True, through every turn of fate,
In our friendship and our hate.
Calm to watch, yet prompt to dare;
Quick to feel, yet firm to bear;
Only timid, only weak,
Before sweet woman's eye and cheek.
We will not serve, we will not know,
The God who is our father's foe.
In our proud cities to his name
No temples rise, no altars flame.
Our flocks of sheep, our groves of spice,
To him afford no sacrifice.
Enough that once the House of Cain
Hath courted with oblation vain
The sullen power above.
Henceforth we bear the yoke no more;
The only gods whom we adore
Are glory, vengeance, love.

"Of our father and our king
Let us grateful children sing.
What eye of living thing may brook
On his blazing brow to look?
What might of living thing may stand
Against the strength of his right hand?
First he led his armies forth
Against the Mammoths of the north,
What time they wasted ir their pride
Pasture and vineyard far and wide.
Then the White River's icy flood
Was thawed with fire and dyed with blood,
And heard for many a league the sound
Of the pine forests blazing round,
And the death-howl and trampling din
Of the gigantic herd within.
From the surging sea of flame
Forth the tortured monsters came;
As of breakers on the shore
Was their onset and their roar;
As the cedar-trees of God
Stood the stately ranks of Nod.
One long night and one short day
The sword was lifted up to slay.
Then marched the firstborn and his sons
O'er the white ashes of the wood,
And counted of that savage brood
Nine times nine thousand skeletons.
"On the snow with carnage red
The wood is piled, the skins are spread.
A thousand fires illume the sky;
Round each a hundred warriors lie.
But, long ere half the night was spent,
Forth thundered from the golden tent
The rousing voice of Cain.
A thousand trumps in answer rang,
And fast to arms the warriors sprang
O'er all the frozen plain.
A herald from the wealthy bay
Hath come with tidings of dismay.
From the Western ocean's coast
Seth hath led a countless host,
And vows to slay with fire and sword
All who call not on the Lord.

His archers hold the mountain forts;
His light-armed ships blockade the ports;
His horsemen tread the harvest down.
On twelve proud bridges he hath passed
The river dark with many a mast,
And pitched his mighty camp at last
Before the imperial town.

"On the south and on the west,
Closely was the city prest.
Before us lay the hostile powers.
The breach was wide between the towers.
Pulse and meal within were sold
For a double weight of gold.
Our mighty father had gone forth
Two hundred marches to the north.
Yet in that extreme of ill
We stoutly kept his city still;
And swore beneath his royal wall,
Like his true sons, to fight and fall.

"Hark, hark, to gong and horn,
Clarion, and fife, and drum,
The morn, the fortieth morn,
Fixed for the great assault is come.
Between the camp and city spreads
A waving sea of helmed heads.
From the royal car of Seth
Was hung the blood-red flag of death:
At sight of that thrice-hallowed sign
Wide flew at once each banner's fold;
The captains clashed their arms of gold;
The war cry of Elohim rolled
Far down their endless line.
On the northern hills afar
Pealed an answering note of war.
Soon the dust in whirlwinds driven,
Rushed across the northern heaven.
Beneath its shroud came thick and loud
The tramp as of a countless crowd;
And at intervals were seen
Lance and hauberk glancing sheen;
And at intervals were heard
Charger's neigh and battle word.

"O what a rapturous cry
From all the city's thousand spires arose,
With what a look the hollow eye
Of the lean watchman glared upon the foes,
With what a yell of joy the mother pressed
The moaning baby to her withered breast,
When through the swarthy cloud that veiled the plain
Burst on his children's sight the flaming brow of Cain!"

There paused perforce that noble song;
For from all the joyous throng,
Burst forth a rapturous shout which drowned
Singer's voice and trumpet's sound.
Thrice that stormy clamor fell,
Thrice rose again with mightier swell.
The last and loudest roar of all
Had died along the painted wall.
The crowd was hushed; the minstrel train
Prepared to strike the chords again;
When on each ear distinctly smote
A low and wild and wailing note.
It moans again. In mute amaze
Menials, and guests, and harpers gaze.
They look above, beneath, around,
No shape doth own that mournful sound.
It comes not from the tuneful quire;
It comes not from the feasting peers;
There is no tone of earthly lyre
So soft, so sad, so full of tears.
Then a strange horror came on all
Who sate at that high festival.
The far-famed harp, the harp of gold,
Dropped from Jubal's trembling hold.
Frantic with dismay the bride
Clung to her Ahirad's side.
And the corpse-like hue of dread
Ahirad's haughty face o'erspread.
Yet not even in that agony of awe
Did the young leader of the fair-haired race
From Tirzah's shuddering grasp his hand withdraw
Or turn his eyes from Tirzah's livid face.
The tigers to their lord retreat,
And crouch and whine beneath his feet.
Prone sink to earth the golden shielded seven.

All hearts are cowed save his alone
Who sits upon the emerald throne;
For he hath heard Elohim speak from heaven
Still thunders in his ear the peal;
Still blazes on his front the seal;
And on the soul of the proud king
No terror of created thing
From sky, or earth, or hell, hath power
Since that unutterable hour.

He rose to speak, but paused, and listening stood,
Not daunted, but in sad and curious mood,
With knitted brow, and searching eye of fire.
A deathlike silence sank on all around,
And through the boundless space was heard no sound,
Save the soft tones of that mysterious lyre.
Broken, faint, and low,
At first the numbers flow.
Louder, deeper, quicker, still
Into one fierce peal they swell,
And the echoing palace fill
With a strange funereal yell.
A voice comes forth. But what, or where
On the earth, or in the air?
Like the midnight winds that blow
Round a lone cottage in the snow,
With howling swell and sighing fall,
It wails along the trophied hall.
In such a wild and dreary moan
The watches of the Seraphim
Poured out all night their plaintive hymn
Before the eternal throne.
Then, when from many a heavenly eye
Drops as of earthly pity fell
For her who had aspired too high,
For him who loved too well.
When, stunned by grief, the gentle pair
From the nuptial garden fair,
Linked in a sorrowful caress,
Strayed through the untrodden wilderness
And close behind their footsteps came
The desolating sword of flame,
And drooped the cedared alley's pride,
And fountains shrank, and roses died.

"Rejoice, O Son of God, rejoice,"
Sang that melancholy voice,
"Rejoice, the maid is fair to see;
The bower is decked for her and thee;
The ivory lamps around it throw
A soft and pure and mellow glow.
Where'er the chastened lustre falls
On roof or cornice, floor or walls,
Woven of pink and rose appear
Such words as love delights to hear.
The breath of myrrh, the lute's soft sound,
Float through the moonlight galleries round.
O'er beds of violet and through groves of spice,
Lead thy proud bride into the nuptial bower;
For thou hast bought her with a fearful price,
And she hath dowered thee with a fearful dower.
The price is life. The dower is death.
Accursed loss! Accursed gain!
For her thou givest the blessedness of Seth,
And to thine arms she brings the curse of Cain.
Round the dark curtains of the fiery throne
Pauses awhile the voice of sacred song:
From all the angelic ranks goes forth a groan,
'How long, O Lord, how long?'
The still small voice makes answer, 'Wait and see,
O sons of glory, what the end shall be.'

But, in the outer darkness of the place
Where God hath shown his power without his grace,
Is laughter and the sound of glad acclaim,
Loud as when, on wings of fire,
Fulfilled of his malign desire,
From Paradise the conquering serpent came.
The giant ruler of the morning star
From off his fiery bed
Lifts high his stately head,
Which Michael's sword hath marked with many a scar
At his voice the pit of hell
Answers with a joyous yell,
And flings her dusky portals wide
For the bridegroom and the bride.

"But louder still shall be the din
In the halls of Death and Sin,

When the full measure runneth o'er,
When mercy can endure no more,
When he who vainly proffers grace,
Comes in his fury to deface
The fair creation of his hand;
When from the heaven streams down amain
For forty days the sheeted rain;
And from his ancient barriers free,
With a deafening roar the sea
Comes foaming up the land.

Mother, cast thy babe aside:
Bridegroom, quit thy virgin bride:
Brother, pass thy brother by:
'Tis for life, for life, ye fly.
Along the drear horizon raves
The swift advancing line of waves.
On: on: their frothy crests appear
Each moment nearer and more near.
Urge the dromedary's speed;
Spur to death the reeling steed;
If perchance ye yet may gain
The mountains that o'erhang the plain.

"O thou haughty land of Nod,
Hear the sentence of thy God.
Thou hast said 'Of all the hills,
Whence, after autumn rains, the rills
In silver trickle down,
The fairest is that mountain white
Which intercepts the morning light
From Cain's imperial town.
On its first and gentlest swell
Are pleasant halls where nobles dwell;
And marble porticoes are seen
Peeping through terraced gardens green.
Above are olives, palms, and vines;
And higher yet the dark-blue pines
And highest on the summit shines
The crest of everlasting ice.
Here let the God of Abel own
That human art hath wonders shown
Beyond his boasted paradise.'

"Therefore on that proud mountain's crown
Thy few surviving sons and daughters
Shall see their latest sun go down
Upon a boundless waste of waters.
None salutes and none replies;
None heaves a groan or breathes a prayer;
They crouch on earth with tearless eyes,
And clenched hands, and bristling hair.
The rain pours on: no star illumes
The blackness of the roaring sky.
And each successive billow booms
Nigher still and still more nigh.
And now upon the howling blast
The wreaths of spray come thick and fast;
And a great billow by the tempest curled
Falls with a thundering crash; and all is o'er.
And what is left of all this glorious world?
A sky without a beam, a sea without a shore.

"O thou fair land, where from their starry home
Cherub and seraph oft delight to roam,
Thou city of the thousand towers,
Thou palace of the golden stairs,
Ye gardens of perennial flowers,
Ye moated gates, ye breezy squares;
Ye parks amidst whose branches high
Oft peers the squirrel's sparkling eye;
Ye vineyards, in whose trellised shade
Pipes many a youth to many a maid;
Ye ports where rides the gallant ship;
Ye marts where wealthy burghers meet;
Ye dark green lanes which know the trip
Of woman's conscious feet;
Ye grassy meads where, when the day is done,
The shepherd pens his fold;
Ye purple moors on which the setting sun
Leaves a rich fringe of gold;
Ye wintry deserts where the larches grow;
Ye mountains on whose everlasting snow
No human foot hath trod;
Many a fathom shall ye sleep
Beneath the gray and endless deep,
In the great day of the revenge of God."

THE COUNTRY CLERGYMEN'S TRIP TO CAMBRIDGE.

An Election Ballad.

(1827.)

As I sate down to breakfast in state,
At my living of Tithing-cum-Boring,
With Betty beside me to wait,
Came a rap that almost beat the door in.
I laid down my basin of tea,
And Betty ceased spreading the toast,
"As sure as a gun, sir," said she,
"That must be the knock of the post."

A letter—and free—bring it here—
I have no correspondent who franks.
No! Yes! Can it be? Why, my dear,
'Tis our glorious, our Protestant Bankes.
"Dear sir, as I know your desire
That the Church should receive due protection,
I humbly presume to require
Your aid at the Cambridge election.

"It has lately been brought to my knowledge,
That the Ministers fully design
To suppress each cathedral and college,
And eject every learned divine.
To assist this detestable scheme
Three nuncios from Rome are come over;
They left Calais on Monday by steam,
And landed to dinner at Dover.

"An army of grim Cordeliers,
Well furnished with relics and vermin,
Will follow, Lord Westmoreland fears,
To effect what their chiefs may determine.
Lollard's bower, good authorities say,
Is again fitting up for a prison;
And a wood-merchant told me to-day
'Tis a wonder how fagots have risen.

"The finance scheme of Canning contains
A new Easter-offering tax;
And he means to devote all the gains
To a bounty on thumb-screws and racks.
Your living, so neat and compact—
Pray, don't let the news give you pain! —
Is promised, I know for a fact,
To an olive-faced Padre from Spain."

I read, and I felt my heart bleed,
Sore wounded with horror and pity;
So I flew, with all possible speed,
To our Protestant champion's committee.
True gentlemen, kind and well-bred!
No fleering! no distance! no scorn!
They asked after my wife who is dead,
And my children who never were born.

They then, like high-principled Tories,
Called our Sovereign unjust and unsteady,
And assailed him with scandalous stories,
Till the coach for the voters was ready.
That coach might be well called a casket
Of learning and brotherly love:
There were parsons in boot and in basket;
There were parsons below and above.

There were Sneaker and Griper, a pair
Who stick to Lord Mulesby like leeches;
A smug chaplain of plausible air,
Who writes my Lord Goslingham's speeches.
Dr. Buzz, who alone is a host,
Who, with arguments weighty as lead,
Proves six times a week in the Post
That flesh somehow differs from bread.

Dr. Nimrod, whose orthodox toes
Are seldom withdrawn from the stirrup;
Dr. Humdrum, whose eloquence flows,
Like droppings of sweet poppy syrup;
Dr. Rosygill puffing and fanning,
And wiping away perspiration;
Dr. Humbug, who proved Mr. Canning
The beast in St. John's Revelation.

A layman can scarce form a notion
Of our wonderful talk on the road;
Of the learning, the wit, and devotion,
Which almost each syllable showed:
Why divided allegiance agrees
So ill with our free constitution;
How Catholics swear as they please,
In hope of the priest's absolution;

How the Bishop of Norwich had bartered
His faith for a legate's commission;
How Lyndhurst, afraid to be martyr'd,
Had stooped to a base coalition;
How Papists are cased from compassion
By bigotry, stronger than steel;
How burning would soon come in fashion,
And how very bad it must feel.

We were all so much touched and excited
By a subject so direly sublime,
That the rules of politeness were slighted,
And we all of us talked at a time;
And in tones, which each moment grew louder
Told how we should dress for the show,
And where we should fasten the powder,
And if we should bellow or no.

Thus from subject to subject we ran,
And the journey passed pleasantly o'er,
Till at last Dr. Humdrum began;
From that time I remember no more.
At Ware commenced his prelection,
In the dullest of clerical drones;
And when he next I regained recollection
We were rumbling o'er Trumpington stones.

SONG.

(1827.)

O stay, Madonna stay;
'Tis not the dawn of day
That marks the skies with yonder opal streak:

The stars in silence shine;
Then press thy lips to mine,
And rest upon my neck thy fervid cheek.

O sleep, Madonna! sleep;
Leave me to watch and weep
O'er the sad memory of departed joys,
O'er hope's extinguished beam,
O'er fancy's vanished dream,
O'er all that nature gives and man destroys

O wake, Madonna! wake;
Even now the purple lake
Is dappled o'er with amber flakes of light;
A glow is on the hill;
And every trickling rill
In golden threads leaps down from yonder height.

O fly, Madonna! fly,
Lest day and envy spy
What only love and night may safely know·
Fly, and tread softly, dear!
Lest those who hate us hear
The sounds of thy light footsteps as they go.

POLITICAL GEORGICS.

(*March*, 1828.)

"Quid faciat lætas segetes," &c.

How cabinets are form'd and how destroy'd,
How Tories are confirm'd, and Whigs decoy'd,
How in nice times a prudent man should vote,
At what conjuncture he should turn his coat,
The truths fallacious, and the candid lies,
And all the lore of sleek majorities,
I sing, great Premier. O, mysterious two,
Lords of our fate, the Doctor and the Jew,
If, by your care enriched, the aspiring clerk
Quits the close alley for the breezy park,

And Dolly's chops and Reid's entire resigns
For odorous fricassees and costly wines;
And you, great pair, through Windsor's shades who rove,
The Faun and Dryad of the conscious grove;
All, all inspire me, for of all I sing,
Doctor and Jew, and M——s and K——g.

Thou, to the maudlin muse of Rydal dear;
Thou more than Neptune, Lowther, lend thine ear.
At Neptune's voice the horse, with flowing mane
And pawing hoof, sprung from th' obedient plain;
But at thy word the yawning earth, in fright,
Engulf'd the victor steed from mortal sight.
Haste from thy woods, mine Arbuthnot, with speed,
Rich woods, where lean Scotch cattle love to feed:
Let Gaffer Gooch and Boodle's patriot band,
Fat from the leanness of a plundered land,
True Cincinnati, quit their patent ploughs,
Their new steam-harrows, and their premium sows;
Let all in bulky majesty appear,
Roll the dull eye, and yawn th' unmeaning cheer,
Ye veteran Swiss, of senatorial wars,
Who glory in your well-earned sticks and stars;
Ye diners-out from whom we guard our spoons;
Ye smug defaulters; ye obscene buffoons;
Come all, of every race and size and form,
Corruption's children, brethren of the worm;
From those gigantic monsters devour
The pay of half a squadron in an hour,
To those foul reptiles, doomed to night and scorn,
Of filth and stench equivocally born;
From royal tigers down to toads and lice;
From Bathursts, Clintons, Fanes, to H——and P——;
Thou last, by habit and by nature blest
With every gift which serves a courtier best,
The lap-dog spittle, the hyæna bile,
The maw of shark, the tear of crocodile,
Whate'er high station, undetermined yet,
Await thee in the longing Cabinet,—
Whether thou seat thee in the room of Peel,
Or from Lord Prig extort the Privy Seal,
Or our Field-marshal-Treasurer fix on thee,
A legal admiral, to rule the sea,
Or Chancery-suits, beneath thy well-known reign,
Turn to their nap of fifty years again;

(Already L——, prescient of his fate,
Yields half his woolsack to thy mightier weight;)
O! Eldon, in whatever sphere thou shine,
For opposition sure will ne'er be thine,
Though scowls apart the lonely pride of Grey,
Though Devonshire proudly flings his staff away,
Though Lansdowne, trampling on his broken chain,
Shine forth the Lansdowne of our hearts again.
Assist me thou; for well I deem, I see
An abstract of my ample theme in thee.
Thou, as thy glorious self hath justly said,
From earliest youth, wast pettifogger bred,
And, raised to power by fortune's fickle will,
Art head and heart a pettifogger still.
So, where once Fleet ditch ran confessed, we view
A crowded mart and stately avenue;
But the Black stream beneath runs on the same,
Still brawls in W——'s key,—still stinks like H——'s name.

THE DELIVERANCE OF VIENNA.

Translated from Vincenzio da Filicaia.

(*Published in the "Winter's Wreath," Liverpool,* 1828.)

"Le corde d'oro elette," &c.

The chords, the sacred chords of gold,
Strike, oh Muse, in measure bold;
And frame a sparkling wreath of joyous songs
For that great God to whom revenge belongs.
Who shall resist his might,
Who marshals for the fight
Earthquake and thunder, hurricane and flame?
He smote the haughty race
Of unbelieving Thrace,
And turned their rage to fear, their pride to shame.
He looked in wrath from high,
Upon their vast array;
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
Tambor, and trump, and battle-cry,
And steeds, and turbaned infantry,
Passed like a dream away.

Such power defends the mansions of the just:
But, like a city without walls,
The grandeur of the mortal falls
Who glories in his strength, and makes not God his trust.
The proud blasphemers thought all earth their own;
They deemed that soon the whirlwind of their ire
Would sweep down tower and palace, dome and spire,
The Christian altars and the Augustan throne.
And soon, they cried, shall Austria bow
To the dust her lofty brow.
The princedoms of Almayne
Shall wear the Phrygian chain;
In humbler waves shall vassal Tiber roll;
And Rome, a slave forlorn,
Her laurelled tresses shorn,
Shall feel our iron in her inmost soul.
Who shall bid the torrent stay?
Who shall bar the lightning's way?
Who arrest the advancing van
Of the fiery Ottoman?

As the curling smoke wreaths fly
When fresh breezes clear the sky,
Passed away each swelling boast
Of the misbelieving host.
From the Hebrus rolling far
Came the murky cloud of war,
And in shower and tempest dread
Burst on Austria's fenceless head.
But not for vaunt or threat
Didst Thou, O Lord, forget
The flock so dearly bought, and loved so well.
Even in the very hour
Of guilty pride and power
Full on the circumcised Thy vengeance fell.
Then the fields were heaped with dead,
Then the streams with gore were red,
And every bird of prey, and every beast,
From wood and cavern thronged to Thy great feast.

What terror seized the fiends obscene of Nile!
How wildly, in his place of doom beneath,
Arabia's lying prophet gnashed his teeth,
And cursed his blighted hopes and wasted guile

When, at the bidding of Thy sovereign might,
Flew on their destined path
Thy messengers of wrath,
Riding on storms and wrapped in deepest night
The Phthian mountains saw,
And quaked with mystic awe:
The proud Sultana of the Straights bowed down
Her jewelled neck and her embattled crown.
The miscreants, as they raised their eyes
Glaring defiance on Thy skies,
Saw adverse winds and clouds display
The terrors of their black array;—
Saw each portentous star
Whose fiery aspect turned of yore to flight
The iron chariots of the Canaanite
Gird its bright harness for a deadlier war.

Beneath Thy withering look
Their limbs with palsy shook;
Scattered on earth the crescent banners lay;
Trembled with panic fear
Sabre and targe and spear,
Through the proud armies of the rising day.
Faint was each heart, unnerved each hand;
And, if they strove to charge or stand,
Their efforts were as vain
As his who, scared in feverish sleep
By evil dreams, essays to leap,
Then backward falls again.
With a crash of wild dismay,
Their ten thousand ranks gave way;
Fast they broke, and fast they fled;
Trampled, mangled, dying, dead,
Horse and horseman mingled lay;
Till the mountains of the slain
Raised the valleys to the plain.
Be all the glory to Thy name divine!
The swords were ours; the arm, O Lord, was Thine.

Therefore to Thee, beneath whose footstool wait
The powers which erring man calls Chance and Fate,
To Thee who hast laid low
The pride of Europe's foe,
And taught Byzantium's sullen lords to fear,

I pour my spirit out
In a triumphant shout,
And call all ages and all lands to hear.
Thou who evermore endurest,
Loftiest, mightiest, wisest, purest,
Thou whose will destroys or saves,
Dread of tyrants, hope of slaves,
The wreath of glory is from Thee,
And the red sword of victory.

There where exulting Danube's flood
Runs stained with Islam's noblest blood
From that tremendous field,
There where in mosque the tyrants met,
And from the crier's minaret
Unholy summons pealed,
Pure shrines and temples now shall be
Decked for a worship worthy Thee.
To Thee thy whole creation pays
With mystic sympathy its praise,
The air, the earth, the seas:
The day shines forth with livelier beam;
There is a smile upon the stream,
An anthem on the breeze.
Glory, they cry, to Him whose might
Hath turned the barbarous foe to flight,
Whose arm protects with power divine
The city of his favored line.
The caves, the woods, the rocks, repeat the sound;
The everlasting hills roll the long echoes round

But, if Thy rescued church may dare
Still to besiege Thy throne with prayer,
Sheathe not, we implore Thee, Lord,
Sheathe not Thy victorious sword.
Still Panonia pines away,
Vassal of a double sway:
Still Thy servants groan in chains,
Still the race which hates Thee reigns:
Part the living from the dead:
Join the members to the head:
Snatch Thine own sheep from yon fell monster's hold;
Let one kind shepherd rule one undivided fold.

He is the victor, only he
Who reaps the fruits of victory.
We conquered once in vain,
When foamed the Ionian waves with gore,
And heaped Lepanto's stormy shore
With wrecks and Moslem slain.
Yet wretched Cyprus never broke
The Syrian tyrant's iron yoke.
Shall the twice vanquished foe
Again repeat his blow?
Shall Europe's sword be hung to rust in peace?
No—let the red-cross ranks
Of the triumphant Franks
Bear swift deliverance to the shrines of Greece;
And in her inmost heart let Asia feel
The avenging plagues of Western fire and steel.

Oh God! for one short moment raise
The veil which hides those glorious days.
The flying foes I see thee urge
Even to the river's headlong verge.
Close on their rear the loud uproar
Of fierce pursuit from Ister's shore
Comes pealing on the wind;
The Rab's wild waters are before,
The Christian sword behind.
Sons of perdition, speed your flight.
No earthly spear is in the rest;
No earthly champion leads to fight
The warriors of the West.
The Lord of Hosts asserts His old renown,
Scatters, and smites, and slays, and tramples down
Fast, fast, beyond what mortal tongue can say,
Or mortal fancy dream,
He rushes on his prey;
Till, with the terrors of the wondrous theme
Bewildered and appalled, I cease to sing,
And close my dazzled eye, and rest my wearied wing.

THE LAST BUCCANEER.

(1839.)

THE winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,
The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name
Alongside the last Buccaneer.

"Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
When all others drive bare on the seas?
Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,
Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?"

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,
Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below, our bark, dies the sea fowl and the shark,
As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"To-night there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde
A loud crash, and a louder roar;
And to-morrow shall the deep, with a heavy moaning sweep
The corpses and the wreck to the shore."

The stately ship of Clyde securely now may ride
In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's towering mast securely now flies fast,
Through the sea of the balmy Trades.

From St. Jago's wealthy port, from Havannah's royal fort,
The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE.

(1845.)

To my true king I offered free from stain.
Courage and faith; vain faith, and courage vain.
For him, I threw lands, honors, wealth, away,
And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.
For him I languished in a foreign clime,
Gray-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting place I asked, an early grave.
Oh thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

LINES WRITTEN IN AUGUST, 1847.

The day of tumult, strife, defeat, was o'er;
Worn out with toil, and noise, and scorn, and spleen,
I slumbered, and in slumber saw once more
A room in an old mansion, long unseen.

That room, methought, was curtained from the light;
Yet through the curtains shone the moon's cold ray
Full on a cradle, where, in linen white,
Sleeping life's first soft sleep, an infant lay.

Pale flickered on the hearth the dying flame,
And all was silent in that ancient hall,
Save when fits on the low night-wind came
The murmur of the distant waterfall.

And lo! the fairy queens who rule our birth
Drew nigh to speak the new born baby's doom:
With noiseless step, which left no trace on earth,
From gloom they came, and vanished into gloom.

Not deigning on the boy a glance to cast,
Swept careless by the gorgeous Queen of Gain;
More scornful still, the Queen of Fashion passed,
With mincing gait and sneer of cold disdain.

The Queen of Power tossed high her jewelled head,
And o'er her shoulder threw a wrathful frown:
The Queen of Pleasure on her pillow shed
Scarce one stray rose-leaf from her fragrant crown.

Still Fay in long procession followed Fay;
And still the little couch remained unblest:
But when those wayward sprites had passed away,
Came One, the last, the mightiest, and the best.

Oh glorious lady, with the eyes of light
And laurels clustering round thy lofty brow,
Who by the cradle's side didst watch that night,
Warbling a sweet strange music, who wast thou?

"Yes, darling; let them go;" so ran the strain:
"Yes; let them go, gain, fashion, pleasure, power,
And all the busy elves to whose domain
Belongs the nether sphere, the fleeting hour.

"Without one envious sigh, one anxious scheme,
The nether sphere, the fleeting hour resign.
Mine is the world of thought, the world of dream,
Mine all the past, and all the future mine.

"Fortune, that lays in sport the mighty low,
Age that to penance turns the joys of youth,
Shall leave untouched the gifts which I bestow,
The sense of beauty and the thirst of truth.

"Of the fair brotherhood who share my grace,
I, from thy natal day, pronounce thee free;
And, if for some I keep a nobler place,
I keep for none a happier than for thee.

"There are who, while to vulgar eyes they seem
Of all my bounties largely to partake,
Of me as of some rival's handmaid deem,
And court me but for gain's, power's, fashion's sake.

"To such, though deep their lore, though wide their fame
Shall my great mysteries be all unknown:
But thou, through good and evil, praise and blame,
Wilt not thou love me for myself alone?

"Yes; thou wilt love me with exceeding love;
And I will tenfold all that love repay,
Still smiling, though the tender may reprove,
Still faithful, though the trusted may betray.

"For aye mine emblem was, and aye shall be,
The ever-during plant whose bough I wear,
Brightest and greenest then, when every tree
That blossoms in the light of Time is bare.

"In the dark hour of shame, I deigned to stand
Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side:
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,
Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

"I brought the wise and brave of ancient days
To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone:
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze
Of the bright ranks that guard the eternal throne.

"And even so, my child, it is my pleasure
That thou not then alone shouldst feel me nigh,
When, in domestic bliss and studious leisure,
Thy weeks uncounted come, uncounted fly;

"Not then alone, when myriads, closely pressed
Around thy car, the shout of triumph raise;
Nor when, in gilded drawing rooms, thy breast
Swells at the sweeter sound of woman's praise.

"No: when on restless night dawns cheerless morrow,
When weary soul and body pine,
Thine am I still, in danger, sickness, sorrow,
In conflict, obloquy, want, exile, thine;

"Thine, where on mountain waves the snowbirds scream,
Where more than Thule's winter barbs the breeze,
Where scarce, though lowering clouds, one sickly gleam
Lights the drear May-day of Antarctic seas;

"Thine, when around the litter's track all day
White sandhills shall reflect the blinding glare;
Thine, when, through forests breathing death, thy way
All night shall wind by many a tiger's lair;

"Thine most, when friends turn pale, when traitors fly,
When, hard beset, thy spirit, justly proud,
For truth, peace, freedom, mercy, dares defy
A sullen priesthood and a raving crowd.

"Amidst the din of all things fell and vile,
Hate's yell, and envy's hiss, and folly's bray,
Remember me; and with an unforced smile
See riches, baubles, flatterers pass away.

"Yes: they will pass away; nor deem it strange:
They come and go, as comes and goes the sea;
And let them come and go: thou, through all change,
Fix thy firm gaze on virtue and on me."

TRANSLATION FROM PLAUTUS.

(1850.)

[The author passed a part of the summer and autumn of 1850 at Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight. He usually, when walking alone, had with him a book. On one occasion, as he was loitering in the landslip near Bonchurch, reading the Rudens of Plautus, it struck him that it might be an interesting experiment to attempt to produce something which might be supposed to resemble passages in the lost Greek drama of Diphilus, from which the Rudens appears to have been taken. He selected one passage in the Rudens, of which he then made the following version, which he afterwards copied out at the request of a friend to whom he had repeated it.]

Act. IV. *Sc.* vii.

Dæmones. O Gripe, Gripe, in ætate hominum plurimæ
Fiunt transennæ, ubi decipiuntur dolis;
Atque edepol in eas plerumque esca imponitur.
Quam si quis avidus pascit escam avariter,
Decipitur in transenna avaritia sua.
Ille, qui consulte, docte, atque astute cavet,
Diutine uti bene licet partum bene.
Mi istæc videtur præda prædatum irier:
Ut cum majore dote abeat, quam advenerit.
Egone ut, quod ad me adlatum esse alienum sciam,
Celem? Minime istuc faciet noster Dæmones.
Semper cavere hoc sapientes æquissimum est,
Ne conscii sint ipsi maleficiis suis.
Ego, mihi quum lusi, nil moror ullum lucrum.

Gripus. Spectavi ego pridem Comicos ad istum modum
Sapienter dicta dicere, atque iis plaudier,
Quum illos sapientis mores monstrabant populo;
Sed quum inde suam quisque ibant diversi domum
Nullus erat illo pacto, ut illi jusserant.

ΔΑΙΜ. Ὦ Γρῖπε, Γρῖπε, πλεῖστα παγίδων σχήματα
ἴδοι τις ἂν πεπηγμέν' ἐν θνητῶν βίῳ,
καὶ πλεῖστ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς δελέαθ' ὧν ἐπιθυμίᾳ
ὀρεγόμενός τις ἐν κακοῖς ἁλίσκεται·
ὅστις δ' ἀπιστεῖ καὶ σοφῶς φυλάττεται
καλῶς ἀπολιπὼν τῶν καλῶς πεπορισμένων.
ἅρπαγμα δ' οὐχ ἅρπαγμ' ὁ λάρναξ οὑτοσί,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς οἶμαι, μᾶλλον ἁρπάξει τινά.
τόνδ' ἄνδρα κλέπτειν τἀλλότρι'—εὐφήμει, τάλαν·
ταυτήν γε μὴ μαίνοιτο μανίαν Δαιμονῆς.
τόδε γὰρ ἀεὶ σοφοῖσιν εὐλαβητέον,
μή τί ποθ' ἑαυτῷ τις ἀδίκημα συννοῇ
κέρδη δ' ἔμοιγε πάνθ' ὅσοις εὐφραίνομαι,
κέρδος δ' ἀκερδὲς ὃ τοὐμὸν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαρ.

ΓΡΙΠ. κἀλῶ μὲν ἤδη κωμικῶν ἀκήκοα
σεμνῶς λεγόντων τοιάδε, τοὺς δὲ θεωμένους
κροτεῖν, ματαίοις ἡδομένους σοφίσμασιν·
εἶθ', ὡς ἀπῆλθ' ἕκαστος οἴκαδ', οὐδενὶ
οὐδὲν παρέμεινε τῶν καλῶς εἰρημένων.

PARAPHRASE.

To Oggier spake King Didier:
"When cometh Charlemange?
We looked for him in harvest:
We looked for him in rain.
Crops are reaped; and floods are past;
And still he is not here.
Some token show, that we may know
That Charlemange is near."

Then to the King made answer
Oggier, the christened Dane:
"When stands the iron harvest,
Ripe on the Lombard plain,
That stiff harvest which is reaped
With sword of knight and peer,
Then by that sign ye may divine
That Charlemange is near.

"When round the Lombard cities
The iron flood shall flow,
A swifter flood than Ticin,
A broader flood than Po,
Frothing white with many a plume,
Dark blue with many a spear,
Then by that sign ye may divine
That Charlemange is near."

INSCRIPTION ON THE STATUE OF LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK.

AT CALCUTTA. (1835.)

To

WILLIAM CAVENDISH BENTINCK,

Who, during seven years, ruled India with eminent
Prudence, Integrity, and Benevolence;
Who, placed at the head of a great empire, never laid aside
The simplicity and moderation of a private citizen:
Who infused into Oriental despotism the spirit of
British Freedom:
Who never forgot that the end of Government is
The happiness of the Governed:
Who abolished cruel rites:
Who effaced humiliating distinctions:
Who gave liberty to the expression of public opinion:
Whose constant study it was, to elevate the intellectual
And moral character of the Nations committed to his charge:
This Monument
Was erected by men,
Who, differing in Race, in Manners, in Language,
And in Religion,
Cherish, with equal veneration and gratitude,
The memory of his wise, upright,
And paternal Administration.

EPITAPH ON SIR BENJAMIN HEATH MALKIN. *

AT CALCUTTA. (1837.)

This monument
Is sacred to the memory
Of
SIR BENJAMIN HEATH MALKIN, Knight,
One of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature:
A man eminently distinguished
By his literary and scientific attainments,
By his professional learning and ability,

* He was born on the 29th September, 1797. He died on the 21st October, 1837.

By the clearness and accuracy of his intellect,
By diligence, by patience, by firmness, by love of truth,
By public spirit, ardent and disinterested,
Yet always under the guidance of discretion,
By rigid uprightness, by unostentatious piety,
By the serenity of his temper,
And by the benevolence of his heart.

EPITAPH ON LORD METCALFE.

(1847.)

Near this stone is laid
CHARLES LORD METCALFE,
A Statesman tried in many high offices
And difficult conjunctures,
And found equal to all.
The three greatest Dependencies of the British Crown
Were successively entrusted to his care.
In India, his fortitude, his wisdom,
His probity, and his moderation,
Are held in honorable remembrance
By men of many races, languages, and religions.
In Jamaica, still convulsed by a social revolution,
His prudence calmed the evil passions
Which long suffering had engendered in one class
And long domination in another.
In Canada, not yet recovered from the calamities of civil war,
He reconciled contending factions
To each other, and to the Mother Country.
Costly monuments in Asiatic and American cities
Attest the gratitude of the nations which he ruled.
This tablet records the sorrow and the pride
With which his memory is cherished by his family.

POMPEII.

A POEM WHICH OBTAINED THE CHANCELLOR'S MEDAL AT THE CAMBRIDGE COMMENCEMENT, JULY, 1819.

Oh! land to Memory and to Freedom dear,
Land of the melting lyre and conquering spear,
Land of the vine-clad hill, the fragrant grove,
Of arts and arms, of Genius and of Love,
Hear, fairest Italy. Though now no more
The glittering eagles awe the Atlantic shore,
Nor at thy feet the gorgeous Orient flings
The blood-bought treasures of her tawny kings;
Though vanished all that formed thine old renown,
The laurel garland, and the jewelled crown,
The avenging poniard, the victorious sword,
Which reared thine empire, or thy rights restored,
Yet still the constant Muses haunt thy shore
And love to linger where they dwelt of yore.
If e'er of old they deigned, with favoring smile,
To tread the sea-girt shores of Albion's isle,
To smooth with classic arts our rugged tongue
And warm with classic glow the British song,
Oh! bid them snatch their silent hearts which wave
On the lone oak that shades thy Maro's grave,*
And sweep with magic hand the slumbering strings,
To fire the poet.—For thy clime he sings,
Thy scenes of gay delight and wild despair,
Thy varied forms of awful and of fair.

How rich that climate's sweets, how wild its storms,
What charms array it, and what rage deforms,
Well have thy mouldering walls, Pompeii, known,
Decked in those charms, and by that rage o'erthrown.
Sad city, gaily dawned thy latest day,
And poured its radiance on a scene as gay.
The leaves scarce rustled in the sighing breeze,
In azure dimples curled the sparkling seas,
And as the golden tide of light they quaffed,
Campania's sunny meads and vineyards laughed,
While gleamed each lichened oak and giant pine
On the far sides of swarthy Apennine.
Then mirth and music through Pompeii rung;
Then verdant wreathes on all her portals hung;

* See Eustace's description of the tomb of Virgil, on the Neapolitan coast.

Her sons, with solemn rite and jocund lay,
Hailed the glad splendors of that festal day.
With fillets bound the hoary priests advance,
And rosy virgins braid the choral dance.
The rugged warrior here unbends awhile
His iron front, and deigns a transient smile;
There, frantic with delight, the ruddy boy
Scarce treads on earth, and bounds and laughs with joy;
From every crowded altar perfumes rise
In billowy clouds of fragrance to the skies.
The milk-white monarch of the herd they lead,
With gilded horns, at yonder shrine to bleed;
And while the victim crops the broiderered plain,
And frisks and gambols towards the destined fane,
They little deem that like himself they stray
To death, unconscious, o'er a flowery way;
Heedless, like him, the impending stroke await,
And sport and wanton on the brink of fate.
What 'vails it that where yonder heights aspire,
With ashes piled, and seathed with rills of fire,
Gigantic phantoms dimly seem to glide,
In misty files along the mountain's side,
To view with threatening scowl your fated lands,
And toward your city point their shadowy hands? *
In vain celestial omens prompted fear,
And nature's signal spoke the ruin near.
In vain through many a night ye viewed from far
The meteor flag of elemental war
Unroll its blazing folds from yonder height,
In fearful sign of earth's intestine fight.
In vain Vesuvius groaned with wrath supprest,
And muttered thunder in his burning breast.
Long since the Eagle from that flaming peak
Hath scared with screams a safer nest to seek.
Awed by the infernal beacon's fitful glare,
The howling fox hath eft his wonted lair;
Nor dares the browsing goat in venturous leap
To spring, as erst, from dizzy steep to steep.—
Man only mocks the peril. Man alone
Defies the sulphurous flame, the warning groan.

* Dio Cassius relates that figures of gigantic size appeared, for some time previous to the destruction of Pompeii, on the summits of Vesuvius. This appearance was probably occasioned by the fantastic forms which the smoke from the crater of the volcano assumed.

While instinct, humbler guardian, wakes and saves,
Proud reason sleeps, nor knows the doom it braves.
But see, the opening theatre invites
The fated myriads to its gay delights.
In, in they swarm, tumultuous as the roar
Of foaming breakers on a rocky shore.
Th' enraptured throng in breathless transport views
The gorgeous temple of the Tragic Muse.
There, while her wand in shadowy pomp arrays
Ideal scenes, and forms of other days
Fair as the hopes of youth, a radiant band,
The sister arts, around her footstool stand,
To deck their Queen, and lend a milder grace
To the stern beauty of that awful face.
Far, far around the ravished eye surveys
The sculptured forms of gods and heroes blaze.
Above, the echoing roofs the peal prolong
Of lofty converse, or melodious song,
While, as the tones of passions sink or swell,
Admiring thousands own the moral spell,
Melt with the melting strains of fancied wo,
With terror stricken, or with transport glow.
Oh! for a voice like that which pealed of old
Through Salem's cedar courts and shrines of gold,
And in wild accents round the trembling dome
Proclaimed the havoc of avenging Rome;
While every palmy arch and sculptured tower
Shook with the footsteps of the parting power.
Such voice might check your tears, which idly stream
For the vain phantoms of the poet's dream;
Might bid those terrors rise, those sorrows flow,
For others perils, and for nearer wo.
The hour is come. Even now the sulphurous cloud
Involves the city in its funeral shroud,
And far along Campania's azure sky
Expands its dark and boundless canopy.
The Sun, though throned on heaven's meridian height,
Burns red and rayless through that sickly night.
Each bosom felt at once the shuddering thrill,
At once the music stopped. The song was still.
None in that cloud's portentous shade might trace
The fearful changes of another's face.
But through that horrid stillness each could hear
His neighbor's throbbing heart beat high with fear.

A moment's pause succeeds. Then wildly rise
Grief's sobbing plaints and terror's frantic cries.
The gates recoil; and towards the narrow pass
In wild confusion rolls the living mass.
Death—when thy shadow sceptre waves away
From his sad couch the prisoner of decay,
Though friendship view the close with glistening eye,
And love's fond lips imbibe the parting sigh,
By torture racked, by kindness soothed in vain,
The soul still clings to being and to pain.
But when have wider terrors clothed thy brow,
Or keener torments edged thy dart than now,
When with thy regal horrors vainly strove
The law of nature and the power of Love?
On mothers babes in vain for mercy call,
Beneath the feet of brothers brothers fall.
Behold the dying wretch in vain upraise
Towards yonder well-known face the accusing gaze;
See trampled to the earth the expiring maid
Clings round her lover's feet, and shrieks for aid.
Vain is the imploring glance, the frenzied cry;
All, all is fear; to succor is to die.—
Saw ye how wild, how red, how broad a light
Burst on the darkness of that mid-day night,
As fierce Vesuvius scattered o'er the vale
His drifted flames and sheets of burning hail,
Shook hell's wan lightnings from his blazing cone,
And gilded heaven with meteors not its own?
The morn all blushing rose; but sought in vain
The snowy villas and the flowery plain,
The purpled hills with marshalled vineyards gay,
The domes that sparkled in the sunny ray.
Where art or nature late hath deck'd the scene
With blazing marble or with spangled green,
There, streaked by many a fiery torrent's bed,
A boundless waste of hoary ashes spread.
Along that dreary waste where lately rung
The festal lay which smiling virgins sung,
Where rapture echoed from the warbling lute,
And the gay dance resounded, all is mute.—
Mute!—Is it Fancy shapes that wailing sound
Which faintly murmurs from the blasted ground,
Or live there still, who breathing in the tomb,
Curse the dark refuge which delays their doom,

In massive vaults, on which the incumbent plain
And ruined city heap their weight in vain?
Oh! who may sing that hour of mortal strife,
When nature calls on Death, yet clings to life?
Who paint the wretch that draws sepulchral breath
A living prisoner in the house of Death?
Pale as the corpse which loads the funeral pile,
With face convulsed that writhes a ghastly smile,
Behold him speechless move with hurried pace,
Incessant, round his dungeon's caverned space,
Now shrink in terror, and now groan in pain,
Gnaw his white lips and strike his burning brain.
Till fear o'erstrained in stupor dies away,
And Madness wrests her victim from dismay.
His arms sink down; his wild and stony eye
Glares without sight on blackest vacancy.
He feels not, sees not: wrapped in senseless trance
His soul is still and listless as his glance.
One cheerless blank, one rayless mist is there,
Thoughts, senses, passions, live not with despair.
Haste, Famine, haste, to urge the destined close,
And lull the horrid scene to stern repose.
Yet ere, dire Fiend, thy lingering tortures cease,
And all be hushed in still sepulchral peace,
Those caves shall wilder, darker deeds behold
Than e'er the voice of song or fable told,
Whate'er dismay may prompt, or madness dare,
Feasts of the grave, and banquets of despair.—
Hide, hide the scene; and o'er the blasting sight
Fling the dark veil of ages and of night.

Go, seek Pompeii now;—with pensive tread
Roam through the silent city of the dead.
Explore each spot, where still, in ruin grand,
Her shapeless piles and tottering columns stand,
Where the pale ivy's clasping wreaths o'ershade
The ruined temple's moss-clad colonnade,
Or violets on the hearth's cold marble wave,
And muse in silence on a people's grave.

Fear not.—No sign of death thine eyes shall scare,
No, all is beauty, verdure, fragrance there.
A gentle slope includes the fatal ground
With odorous shrubs and tufted myrtles crowned,
Beneath, o'ergrown with grass, or wreathed with flowers,

Lie tombs and temples, columns, baths, and towers.
As if in mockery, Nature seems to dress
In all her charms the beauteous wilderness,
And bids her gayest flowerets twine and bloom
In sweet profusion o'er a city's tomb.
With roses here she decks the untrodden path,
With lilies fringes there the stately bath;
The acanthus' * spreading foliage here she weaves
Round the gay capital which mocks its leaves;
There hangs the sides of every mouldering room
With tapestry from her own fantastic loom,
Wallflowers and weeds, whose glowing hues supply
With simple grace the purple's Tyrian dye.
The ruined city sleeps in fragrant shade,
Like the pale corpse of some Athenian maid,†
Whose marble arms, cold brows, and snowy neck
The fairest flowers of fairest climates deck,
Meet types of her whose form their wreaths array,
Of radiant beauty, and of swift decay.

Advance, and wander on through crumbling halls,
Through prostrate gates and ivied pedestals,
Arches, whose echoes now no chariots rouse,
Tombs, on whose summits goats undaunted browse.
See where yon ruined wall on earth reclines,
Through weeds and moss the half-seen painting shines,
Still vivid midst the dewy cowslips grows,
Or blends its colors with the blushing rose.
Thou lovely, ghastly scene of fair decay,
In beauty awful, and midst horrors gay,
Renown more wide, more bright shall gild thy name,
Than thy wild charms or fearful doom could claim.
Immortal spirits, in whose deathless song
Latium and Athens yet their reign prolong,
And from their thrones of fame and empire hurled,
Still sway the sceptre of the mental world,
You in whose breasts the flames of Pindus beamed,
Whose copious lips with rich persuasion streamed,
Whose minds unravelled nature's mystic plan,
Or traced the mazy labyrinth of man:

* The capital of the Corinthian pillar is carved, as is well known, in imitation of the acanthus. Mons. de Chateaubriand, as I have found since this Poem was written, has employed the same image in his Travels.

† It is the custom of the modern Greeks to adorn corpses profusely with flowers.

Bend, glorious spirits, from your blissful bowers,
And broidered couches of unfading flowers,
While round your locks the Elysian garlands blow
With sweeter odors, and with brighter glow.
Once more, immortal shades, atoning fame
Repair the honors of each glorious name.
Behold Pompeii's opening vaults restore
The long-lost treasures of your ancient lore,
The vestal radiance of poetic fire,
The stately buskin and the tuneful lyre,
The wand of eloquence, whose magic sway
The sceptres and the swords of earth obey,
And every mighty spell, whose strong control
Could nerve or melt, could fire or soothe the soul.
And thou, sad city, raise thy drooping head,
And share the honors of the glorious dead.
Had fate reprieved thee till the frozen north
Poured in wild swarms its hoarded millions forth,
Till blazing cities marked where Albion trod,
Or Europe quaked beneath the *scourge of God*,*
No lasting wreath had graced thy funeral pall,
No fame redeemed the horrors of thy fall.
Now shall thy deathless memory live entwined
With all that conquers, rules, or charms the mind.
Each lofty thought of Poet or of Sage,
Each grace of Virgil's lyre or Tully's page.
Like theirs whose genius consecrates thy tomb,
Thy fame shall snatch from time a greener bloom,
Shall spread where'er the Muse has reared her throne,
And live renowned in accents yet unknown;
Earth's utmost bounds shall join the glad acclaim,
And distant Camus bless Pompeii's name.

* The well-known name of Attila.

BATTLE OF IVRY.

[Henry the Fourth, on his accession to the French crown, was opposed by a large part of his subjects under the Duke of Mayenne, with the assistance of Spain and Savoy. In March, 1590, he gained a decisive victory over that party at Ivry. Before the battle, he addressed his troops, "My children, if you lose sight of your colors, rally to my white plume you will always find it in the path to honor and glory." His conduct was answerable to his promise. Nothing could resist his impetuous valor, and the leaguers underwent a total and bloody defeat. In the midst of the rout, Henry followed, crying—"Save the French!" and his clemency added a number of the enemies to his own army.—*Aikin's Biographical Dictionary.*]

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry of Navarre!
Now let there be the merry sound of music and the dance,
Through thy cornfields green and sunny vines, oh! pleasant land of France.
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.
As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy,
For cold, and stiff, and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah! hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war;
Hurrah! hurrah! for Ivry and King Henry of Navarre.

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,
We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array;
With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel peers,
And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears,
There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land,
And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand;
And as we looked on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood,
And good Coligni's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood;
And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,
To fight for his own holy name and Henry of Navarre.

The King is come to marshal us, in all his armor drest,
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest;
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye,
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line, in deafening shout, "God save our lord, the King."
"And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may—
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray—
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre."

Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin!
The fiery Duke is pricking fast across St. André's plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies now upon them with the lance!
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while, like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours! Mayenne hath turned his rein,
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter, the Flemish Count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags and cloven mail;
And then we thought on vengeance, and all along our van,
"Remember St. Bartholomew," was passed from man to man;

But out spake gentle Henry then, "No Frenchman is my foe;
Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go."
Oh! was there ever such a knight in friendship or in war,
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre.

Ho! maidens of Vienna,—ho! matrons of Luzerne,
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.
Ho! Philip, send for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls.
Ho! gallant nobles of the league, look that your arms be bright;
Ho! burghers of St. Généviève, keep watch and ward to-night;
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised the slave,
And mocked the counsel of the wise and the valor of the brave.
Then glory to his holy name from whom all glories are;
And glory to our sovereign lord, King Henry of Navarre.

THE ARMADA.

Attend, all ye who list to hear
Our noble England's praise;
I tell of the thrice famous deeds
She wrought in ancient days,
When that great fleet invincible
Against her bore in vain
The richest spoils of Mexico,
The stoutest hearts of Spain.

It was about the lovely close
Of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship
Full sail to Plymouth Bay;
Her crew hath seen Castile's black fleet,
Beyond Aurigny's isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves,
Lie heaving many a mile.

At sunrise she escaped their van,
By God's especial grace;
And the tall Pinta, till the noon,
Had held her close in chase.
Forthwith a guard at every gun
Was placed along the wall;
The beacon blazed upon the roof
Of Edgecumbe's lofty hall;
Many a light fishing bark put out
To pry along the coast,
And with loose rein and bloody spur
Rode inland many a post.
With his white hair unbonneted,
The stout old sheriff comes;
Before him march the halberdiers;
Before him sound the drums;
His yeomen round the market cross
Make clear an ample space;
For there behooves him to set up
The standard of Her Grace.
And haughtily the trumpets peal
And gayly dance the bells,
As slow upon the laboring wind
The royal blazon swells.
Look how the Lion of the sea
Lifts up his ancient crown,
And underneath his deadly paw
Treads the gay lilies down.
So stalked he when he turned to flight,
On that famed Picard field,
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow,
And Cæsar's eagle shield.
So glared he when at Agincourt
In wrath he turned to bay,
And crushed and torn beneath his claws
The princely hunters lay.
Ho! strike the flag-staff deep, Sir Knight:
Ho! scatter flowers, fair maids:
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute:
Ho! gallants, draw your blades:
Thou sun, shine on her joyously;
Ye breezes, waft her wide;
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM,
The banner of our pride.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled
That banner's massy fold;
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed
That haughty scroll of gold;
Night sank upon the dusky beach,
And on the purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er hath been
Nor e'er again shall be.
From Eddystone to Berwick bounds,
From Lynn to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright
And busy as the day;
For swift to east and swift to west
The ghastly war-flame spread,
High on St. Michael's Mount it shone:
It shone on Beachy Head.
Far on the deep the Spaniard saw,
Along each southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range,
Those twinkling points of fire.
The fisher left his skiff to rock
On Tamar's glittering waves:
The rugged miners poured to war
From Mendip's sunless caves:
O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oak
The fiery herald flew:
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge,
The rangers of Beaulieu.
Right sharp and quick the bells all night
Rang out from Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse
Had met on Clifton down;
The sentinel on Whitehall gate
Looked forth into the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill
The streak of blood-red light.
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar
The death-like silence broke,
And with one start, and with one cry,
The royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates
Arose the answering fires;
At once the wild alarum clashed
From all her reeling spires;

From all the batteries of the Tower
Pealed loud the voice of fear;
And all the thousand masts of Thames
Sent back a louder cheer:
And from the furthest wards was heard
The rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags
Rushed down each roaring street;
And broader still became the blaze,
And louder still the din,
As fast from every village round
The horse came spurring in:
And eastward straight from wild Blackheath
The warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall
The gallant squires of Kent.
Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills
Flew those bright couriers forth;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor
They started for the north:
And on, and on, without a pause
Untired they bounded still:
All night from tower to tower they sprang;
They sprang from hill to hill:
Till the proud peak unfurled the flag
O'er Darwin's rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven
The stormy hills of Wales,
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze
On Malvern's lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind
The Wrekin's crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the stars came forth
On Ely's stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms
O'er all the boundless plain;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces
The sign of Lincoln sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on
O'er the wide vale of Trent;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned
On Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused
The burghers of Carlisle.

* * * * * * *

THE CAVALIER'S MARCH TO LONDON.

To horse! to horse! brave cavaliers!
To horse for church and crown!
Strike, strike your tents! snatch up your spears!
And ho for London town!
The imperial harlot, doomed a prey
To our avenging fires,
Sends up the voice of her dismay
From all her hundred spires.

The Strand resounds with maiden's shrieks,
The 'Change with merchants' sighs,
And blushes stand on brazen cheeks,
And tears in iron eyes;
And, pale with fasting and with fright,
Each Puritan committee
Hath summoned forth to prayer and fight
The Roundheads of the city.

And soon shall London's sentries hear
The thunder of our drum,
And London's dames, in wilder fear,
Shall cry, Alack! They come!
Fling the fascines;—tear up the spikes;
And forward, one and all.
Down, down with all their train-band pikes,
Down with their mud-built wall.

Quarter?—Foul fall your whining noise,
Ye recreant spawn of fraud!
No quarter! Think on Strafford, boys.
No quarter! Think on Laud.
What ho! The craven slaves retire.
On! Trample them to mud,
No quarter! Charge.—No quarter!
No quarter! Blood! blood! blood!

Where next? In sooth there lacks no witch
Brave lads, to tell us where,
Sure London's sons be passing rich,
Her daughters wondrous fair:
And let that dastard be the theme
Of many a board's derision,
Who quails for sermon, cuff, or scream
Of any sweet precisian.

Their lean divines, of solemn brow,
Sworn foes to throne and steeple,
From an unwonted pulpit now
Shall edify the people:
Till the tired hangman, in despair,
Shall curse his blunted shears,
And vainly pinch, and scrape, and tear,
Around their leathern ears.

We'll hang, above his own Guildhall,
The city's grave Recorder,
And on the den of thieves we'll fall,
Though Pym should speak to order.
In vain the lank-haired gang shall try
To cheat our martial law;
In vain shall Lenthall trembling cry
That strangers must withdraw.

Of bench and woolsack, tub and chair,
We'll build a glorious pyre,
And tons of rebel parchment there
Shall crackle in the fire.
With them shall perish, cheek by jowl,
Petition, psalm, and libel,
The colonel's canting muster-roll
The chaplain's dog-eared Bible.

We'll tread a measure round the blaze
Where England's pest expires,
And lead along the dance's maze
The beauties of the friars:
Then smiles in every face shall shine,
And joy in every soul.
Bring forth, bring forth the oldest wine,
And crown the largest bowl.

And as with nod and laugh ye sip
The goblet's rich carnation,
Whose bursting bubbles seem to tip
The wink of invitation;
Drink to those names,—those glorious names,
Those names no time shall sever,—
Drink, in a draught as deep as Thames,
Our church and king for ever!

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

PREFACE.

THAT what is called the history of the kings and early consuls of Rome is to a great extent fabulous, few scholars have, since the time of Beaufort, ventured to deny. It is certain that, more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city, the public records were, with scarcely an exception, destroyed by the Gauls. It is certain that the oldest annals of the commonwealth were compiled more than a century and a half after the destruction of the records. It is certain, therefore, that the great Latin writers of a later period did not possess those materials, without which a trustworthy account of the infancy of the republic could not possibly be framed. They own, indeed, that the chronicles to which they had access were filled with battles that were never fought and consuls that were never inaugurated; and we have abundant proof that, in these chronicles, events of the greatest importance, such as the issue of the war with Porsena, and the issue of the war with Brennus, were grossly misrepresented. Under these circumstances a wise man will look with great suspicion on the legend which has come down to us. He will, perhaps, be inclined to regard the princes who are said to have founded the civil and religious institutions of Rome, the son of Mars, and the husband of Egeria, as mere mythological personages of the same class with Perseus and Ixion. As he draws nearer and nearer to the confines of authentic history, he will become less and less hard of belief. He will admit that the most important parts of the narrative have some foundation in truth. But he will distrust almost all the details, not only because they

seldom rest on any solid evidence, but also because he will constantly detect in them, even when they are within the limits of physical possibility, that peculiar character, more easily understood than defined, which distinguishes the creations of the imagination from the realities of the world in which we live.

The early history of Rome is indeed far more poetical than anything else in Latin literature. The loves of the Vestal and the God of War, the cradle laid among the reeds of Tiber, the fig-tree, the she-wolf, the shepherd's cabin, the recognition, the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the death of Tarpeia, the fall of Hostus Hostilius, the struggle of Mettus Curtius though the marsh, the women rushing with torn raiment and dishevelled hair between their fathers and their husbands, the nightly meetings of Numa and the Nymph by the well in the sacred grove, the fight of the three Romans and the three Albans, the purchase of the Sibylline books, the crime of Tullia, the simulated madness of Brutus, the ambiguous reply of the Delphian oracle to the Tarquins, the wrongs of Lucretia, the heroic actions of Horatius Cocles, of Scævola, and of Cœlia, the battle of Regillus won by the aid of Castor and Pollux, the fall of Cremera, the touching story of Coriolanus, the still more touching story of Virginia, the wild legend about the draining of the Alban lake, the combat between Valerius Corvus and the gigantic Gaul, are among the many instances which will at once suggest themselves to every reader.

In the narrative of Livy, who was a man of fine imagination, these stories retain much of their genuine character. Nor could even the tasteless Dionysius distort and mutilate them into mere prose. The poetry shines, in spite of him, through the dreary pedantry of his eleven books. It is discernible in the most tedious and in the most superficial modern works on the early times of Rome. It enlivens the dulness of the Universal History, and gives a charm to the most meager abridgments of Goldsmith.

Even in the age of Plutarch there were discerning men who rejected the popular account of the foundation of Rome, because that account appeared to them to have the air, not of a history, but of a romance or a drama. Plutarch, who was displeased at their incredulity, had nothing better to say in reply to their arguments than that chance sometimes turns poet, and produces trains of events not to be distinguished from the most elaborate plots which are constructed

by art.* But though the existence of a poetical element in the early history of the Great City was detected so many ages ago, the first critic who distinctly saw from what source that poetical element had been derived was James Perizonius, one of the most acute and learned critics of the seventeenth century. His theory, which, in his own age, attracted little or no notice, was revived in the present generation by Niebuhr, a man who would have been the first writer of his time, if his talent for communicating truths had borne any proportion to his talent for investigating them. It has been adopted by several eminent scholars of our own country, particularly by the Bishop of St. David's, by Professor Malden, and by the lamented Arnold. It appears to be now generally received by men conversant with classical antiquity; and indeed it rests on such strong proofs, both internal and external, that it will not be easily subverted. A popular exposition of this theory and of the evidence by which it is supported may not be without interest even for readers who are unacquainted with the ancient languages.

The Latin literature which has come down to us is of later date than the commencement of the second Punic war, and consists almost exclusively of words fashioned on Greek models. The Latin metres, heroic, elegiac, lyric, and dramatic, are of Greek origin. The best Latin epic poetry is the feeble echo of the Iliad and Odyssey. The best Latin eclogues are imitations of Theocritus. The plan of the most finished didactic poem in the Latin tongue was taken from Hesiod. The Latin tragedies are bad copies of the masterpieces of Sophocles and Euripides. The Latin comedies are free translations from Demophilus, Menander, and Apollodorus. The Latin philosophy was borrowed, without alteration, from the Portico and the academy; and the great Latin orators constantly proposed to themselves as patterns the speeches of Demosthenes and Lysias.

But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished—which had, indeed, almost wholly perished long before those whom we are in the habit of regarding as the greatest Latin writers were born. That literature abounded with metrical romances,

* Ὑποπτον μὲν ενιοις εστι το δραματικον και πλασματωδες· οὐ δει δε απιστειν, την τύχην δρῶντας, οιων ποιημάτων δημιουργος εστι.—Plut. Rom. viii. This remarkable passage has been more grossly misinterpreted than any other in the Greek language, where the sense was so obvious. The Latin version of Cruserius, the French version of Amyot, the old English version by several hands, and the later English version by Langhorne, are all equally destitute of every trace of the meaning of the original. None of the translators saw even that ποιημα is a poem. They all render it an event.

such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing. All human beings, not utterly savage, long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind. But it is only in very enlightened communities that books are readily accessible. Metrical composition, therefore, which, in a highly civilized nation, is a mere luxury, is, in nations imperfectly civilized, almost a necessary of life, and is valued less on account of the pleasure which it gives to the ear than on account of the help which it gives to the memory. A man who can invent or embellish an interesting story, and put it into a form which others may easily retain in their recollection, will always be highly esteemed by a people eager for amusement and information, but destitute of libraries. Such is the origin of ballad-poetry, a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to spring up and flourish in every society, at a certain point in the progress towards refinement. Tacitus informs us that songs were the only memorials of the past which the ancient Germans possessed. We learn from Lucan and from Ammianus Marcellinus, that the brave actions of the ancient Gauls were commemorated in the verses of Bards. During many ages, and through many revolutions, minstrelsy retained its influence over both the Teutonic and the Celtic race. The vengeance exacted by the spouse of Attila for the murder of Siegfried was celebrated in rhyme, of which Germany is still justly proud. The exploits of Athelstane were commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons, and those of Canute by the Danes, in rude poems, of which a few fragments have come down to us. The chants of the Welsh harpers preserved, through ages of darkness, a faint and doubtful memory of Arthur. In the highlands of Scotland may still be gleaned some reliques of the old songs about Cuthullin and Fingal. The long struggle of the Servians against the Ottoman power was recorded in lays full of martial spirit. We learn from Herrera that, when a Peruvian Inca died, men of skill were appointed to celebrate him in verses which all the people learned by heart, and sang in public on days of festival. The feats of Kurroglou, the great freebooter of Turkistan, recounted in ballads composed by himself, are known in every village of Northern Persia. Captain Beechey heard the bards of the Sandwich Islands recite the heroic achievements of Tamehameha, the most illustrious of their kings.

Mungo Park found in the heart of Africa a class of singing men, the only annalists of their rude tribes, and heard them tell the story of the great victory which Damel, the negro prince of the Jaloffs, won over Abdulkader, the Mussulman tyrant of Foota Torra. This species of poetry attained a high degree of excellence among the Castilians, before they began to copy Tuscan patterns. It attained a still higher degree of excellence among the English and the Lowland Scotch, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. But it reached its full perfection in ancient Greece; for there can be doubt that the great Homeric poems are generically ballads, though widely indeed distinguished from all other ballads, and, indeed, from almost all other human compositions, by transcendent merit.

As it is agreeable to general experience that, at a certain stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should flourish, so it is also agreeable to general experience that at a subsequent stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should be undervalued and neglected. Knowledge advances: manners change: great foreign models of composition are studied and imitated. The phraseology of the old minstrels becomes obsolete. Their versification, which, having received its laws only from the ear, abounds in irregularities, seems licentious and uncouth. Their simplicity appears beggarly when compared with the quaint forms and gaudy coloring of such artists as Cowley and Gongora. The ancient lays, unjustly despised by the learned and polite, linger for a time in the memory of the vulgar, and are at length too often irretrievably lost. We cannot wonder that the ballads of Rome should have altogether disappeared, when we remember how very narrowly, in spite of the invention of printing, those of our own country and those of Spain escaped the same fate. There is, indeed, little doubt that oblivion covers many English songs equal to any that were published by Bishop Percy, and many Spanish songs as good as the best of those which have been so happily translated by Mr. Lockhart. Eighty years ago England possessed only one tattered copy of Childe Waters and Sir Cauline, and Spain only one tattered copy of the noble poem of the Cid. The snuff of a candle, or a mischievous dog, might in a moment have deprived the world forever of any of those fine compositions. Sir Walter Scott, who united to the fire of a great poet the minute curiosity and patient diligence of a great antiquary, was but just in time to save the precious

reliques of the Minstrelsy of the Border. In Germany, the lay of the Nibelungs had been long utterly forgotten, when, in the eighteenth century, it was, for the first time, printed from a manuscript in the old library of a noble family. In truth, the only people who, through their whole passage from simplicity to the highest civilization, never for a moment ceased to love and admire their old ballads, were the Greeks.

That the early Romans should have had ballad poetry, and that this poetry should have perished, is, therefore, not strange. It would, on the contrary, have been strange if it had not come to pass; and we should be justified in pronouncing them highly probable, even if we had no direct evidence on the subject. But we have direct evidence of unquestionable authority.

Ennius, who flourished in the time of the second Punic War, was regarded in the Augustan age as the father of Latin poetry. He was, in truth, the father of the second school of Latin poetry,—of the only school of which the works have descended to us. But from Ennius himself we learn that there were poets who stood to him in the same relation in which the author of the romance of Count Alarcos stood to Garcilaso, or the author of the "Lytell Geste of Robin Hode" to Lord Surrey. Ennius speaks of verses which the Fauns and the Bards were wont to chant in the old time, when none had yet studied the graces of speech, when none had yet climbed the peaks sacred to the Goddesses of Grecian song. "Where," Cicero mournfully asks, "are those old verses now?" *

Contemporary with Ennius was Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest of the Roman annalists. His account of the infancy and youth of Romulus and Remus has been preserved by Dionysius, and contains a very remarkable reference to the

> "Quid? Nostri veteras versus ubi sunt?
> . . . . . 'Quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant,
> Cum neque Musarum scopulos quisquam superarat,
> Nec dicti studiosus erat.'"
>
> Cic. in *Bruto*, cap. xviii.

The Muses, it should be observed, are Greek divinities. The Italian Goddesses of verse were the Camœnæ. At a later period, the appellations were used indiscriminately; but in the age of Ennius there was probably a distinction. In the epitaph of Nævius, who was the representative of the old Italian school of poetry, the Camœnæ, not the Muses, are represented as grieving for the loss of their votary. The "Musarum scopuli" are evidently the peaks of Parnassus.

Scaliger, in a note on Varro (*De Lingua Latina*, lib. vi.), suggests, with great ingenuity, that the Fauns, who were represented by the superstition of later ages as a race of monsters, half gods and half brutes, may really have been a class of men who exercised in Latium, at a very remote period, the same functions which belonged to the Magians in Persia, and to the Bards in Gaul.

old Latin poetry. Fabius says that, in his time, his countrymen were still in the habit of singing ballads about the Twins. "Even in the hut of Faustulus,"—so these old lays appear to have run,—"the children of Rhea and Mars were, in port and in spirit, not like unto swineherds or cowherds, but such that men might well guess them to be of the blood of kings and gods." *

Cato the Censor, who also lived in the days of the Second Punic War, mentioned this lost literature in his lost work on the antiquities of his country. Many ages, he said, before his time, there were ballads in praise of illustrious

* Οι δε ἀνδρωεθεντες γινονται, κατα τε αξιωσιν ὁρφης και φρονημ ος ογκον, ου συοφορβοις και βουκολοις εοικοτες, αλλ" οιους αν τις αξιωσειε τους εκ βασιλειου τε φυντας γενους, και απο δυιμοιων σπορας γενεσθαι νομιζομενους,ως εν τοις πατριοις νομοις υπο Ρωμαιων ετι και νυνα δεται.—*Dion. Hal.* i. 79. This passage has sometimes been cited as if Dionysius had been speaking in his own person, and had, Greek as he was, been so industrious or so fortunate as to discover some valuable remains of that early Latin poetry which the greatest Latin writers of his age re gretted as hopelessly lost. Such a supposition is highly improbable; and indeed it seems clear from the context that Dionysius, as Reiske and other editors evidently thought, was merely quoting from Fabius Pictor. The whole passage has the air of an extract from an ancient chronicle, and is introduced by the words, Κοιντος μεν φάβιος ὁ Πικτωρ λεγόμενος, φησε γραφει.

Another argument may be urged which seems to deserve consideration. The author of the passage in question mentions a thatched hut which, in his time, stood between Mount Palatine and the Circus. This hut, he says, was built by Romulus, and was constantly kept in repair at the public charge, but never in any respect embellished. Now, in the age of Dionysius there certainly was at Rome a thatched hut, said to have been that of Romulus. But this hut as we learn from Vitruvius, stood, not near the Circus, but in the Capitol. (Vit. ii. 1.) If, therefore, we understand Dionysius to speak in his own person, we can reconcile his statement with that of Vitruvius only by supposing that there were at Rome, in the Augustan age, two thatched huts, both believed to have been built by Romulus, and both carefully repaired, and held in high honor. The objections to such a supposition seem to be strong. Neither Dionysius nor Vitruvius speaks of more than one such hut. Dio Cassius informs us that twice, during the long administration of Augustus, the hut of Romulus caught fire (xlviii. 43. liv. 29.) Had there been two such huts, would he not have told us of which he spoke? An English historian would hardly give an account of a fire at Queen's College without saying whether it was at Queen's College, Oxford, or at Queen's College, Cambridge. Marcus Seneca, Macrobius, and Conon, a Greek writer from whom Photius has made large extracts, mention only one hut of Romulus, that in the Capitol. (*M. Seneca, Contr.* 1. 6; *Macrobius, Sat.* 1. 15; *Photius. Bibl.* 186.) Ovid, Petronius, Valerius Maximus, Lucius Seneca, and St. Jerome, mention only one hut of Romulus without specifying the site. (*Ovid, Fasti*, iii. 183, *Petronius, Fragm.; Val. Max.* iv. 4; *L. Seneca, Consolatio ad Helviam: D. Hieron. ad Paulinianum de Didymo.*)

The whole difficulty is removed, if we suppose that Dionysius was merely quoting Fabius Pictor. Nothing is more probable than that the cabin which in the time of Fabius stood near the Circus, might, long before the age of Augustus, have been transported to the Capitol, as the place fittest, by reason both of its safety and of its sanctity, to contain so precious a relic.

The language of Plutarch confirms this hypothesis. He describes, with great precision, the spot where Romulus dwelt between the Palatine Mount and the Circus; but he says not a word implying that the dwelling was still to be seen there. Indeed, his expressions imply that it was no longer there. The evidence of Solinus is still more to the point. He, like Plutarch, describes the spot where Romulus had resided, and says expressly that the hut had been there, but that, in his time, it was there no longer. The site, it is certain, was well remembered, and probably retained its old name, as Charing Cross and the Haymarket have done. This is probably the explanation of the words, "casa Romuli" in Victor's description of the Tenth Region of Rome, under Valentinian.

men; and these ballads it was the fashion for the guests at banquets to sing in turn while the piper played. "Would," exclaims Cicero, "that we still had the old ballads of which Cato speaks!" *

Valerius Maximus gives us exactly similar information, without mentioning his authority, and observes that the ancient Roman ballads were probably of more benefit to the young than all the lectures of the Athenian schools, and that to the influence of the national poetry were to be ascribed the virtues of such men as Camillus and Fabricius.†

Varro, whose authority on all questions connected with the antiquities of his country is entitled to the greatest respect, tells us that at banquets it was once the fashion for boys to sing, sometimes with and sometimes without instrumental music, ancient ballads in praise of men of former times. These young performers, he observes, were of unblemished character, a circumstance which he probably mentioned because, among the Greeks, and indeed in his time among the Romans also, the morals of singing boys were in no high repute.‡

The testimony of Horace, though given incidentally, confirms the statements of Cato, Valerius Maximus, and Varro. The poet predicts that, under the peaceful administration of Augustus, the Romans will, over their full goblets, sing to the pipe, after the fashion of their fathers, the deeds of brave captains, and the ancient legends touching the origin of the city.§

The proposition, then, that Rome had ballad-poetry is

* Cicero refers twice to this important passage in Cato's Antiquities:—"Gravissimus auctor in 'Originibus' dixit Cato, morem apud majores hunc epularum fuisse, ut deinceps, qui accubarent, canerent ad tibiam clarorum virorum laudes atque virtutes. Ex quo perspicuum est, et cantus tum fuisse rescriptos vocum sonis, et carmina."—*Tusc. Quæst.* iv. 2. Again: "Utinam exstarent illa carmine quæ multis sæculis ante suam ætatem in epulis esse cantitata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus in 'Originibus' scriptum reliquit Cato."—*Brutus.* cap. xix.

† "Majores natu in conviviis ad tibias egregia superiorum opera carmine comprehensa pangebant, quo ad ea imitanda juventutem alacriorum redderent. * * * * Quas Athenas, quam scholam, quæ alienigena studia huic domesticæ disciplinæ præstulerim? Inde oriebantur Camilli, Scipiones, Fabricii, Marcelli, Fabii."—*Val. Max.* ii. 1.

‡ "In conviviis pueri modesti ut cantarent carmina antiqua, in quibus laudes erant majorum, et assa voce, et cum tibicine."—Nonius, *Assa voce pro sola.*

§ "Nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris,
Inter jocosi munera Liberi,
Cum prole matronisque nostris,
Rite Deos prius apprecati,
Virtute functos, MORE PATRUM, duces,
Lydis remixto carmine tibiis,
Trojamque, et Anchisen, et almæ
Progeniem Veneri canemus."

Carm. iv. 51.

not merely in itself highly probable, but it is fully proved by direct evidence of the greatest weight.

This proposition being established, it becomes easy to understand why the early history of the city is unlike almost everything else in Latin literature—native where almost everything else is borrowed, imaginative where almost everything else is prosaic. We can scarcely hesitate to pronounce that the magnificent, pathetic, and truly national legends, which present so striking a contrast to all that surrounds them, are broken and defaced fragments of that early poetry which, even in the age of Cato the Censor, had become antiquated, and of which Tully had never heard a line.

That this poetry should have been suffered to perish will not appear strange when we consider how complete was the triumph of the Greek genius over the public mind of Italy. It is probable that, at an early period, Homer, Archilochus, and Herodotus, furnished some hints to the Latin minstrels:* but it was not till after the war with Pyrrhus that the poetry of Rome began to put off its old Ausonian character. The transformation was soon consummated. The conquered, says Horace, led captive the conquerors. It was precisely at the time at which the Roman people rose to unrivalled political ascendancy, that they stooped to pass under the intellectual yoke. It was precisely at the time at which the sceptre departed from Greece that the empire of her language and of her arts became universal and despotic. The revolution indeed was not effected without a struggle. Nævius seems to have been the last of the ancient line of poets. Ennius was the founder of a new dynasty. Nævius celebrated the first Punic war in Saturnian verse, the old national verse of Italy.† Ennius sang the second Punic

* See the Preface to the Lay of the Battle of Regillus.

† Cicero speaks highly in more than one place of this poem of Nævius. Ennius sneered at it, and stole from it.

As to the Saturnian measure, see Herman's Elementa Doctrinæ Metricæ. lii. 9.

The Saturnian line consisted of two parts. The first was a catalectic dimeter iambic; the second was composed of three trochees. But the license taken by the early Latin poets seems to have been almost boundless. The most perfect Saturnian line which has been preserved by the grammarians was the work, not of a professional artist, but of an amateur;

"Dabunt malum Metelli Nævio poetæ."

There has been much difference of opinion among learned men respecting the history of this measure. That it is the same with a Greek measure used by Archilochus is indisputable. (Bentley, Phalaris, xi.) But in spite of the authority of Terentianus Maurus, and of the still higher authority of Bentley, we may venture to doubt whether the coincidence was not fortuitous. We constantly find the same rude and simple numbers in different countries, under circumstances which make it impossible to suspect that there has been imitation

War in numbers borrowed from the Iliad. The elder poet, in the epitaph which he wrote for himself, and which is a fine specimen of the early Roman diction and versification, plaintively boasted that the Latin language had died with him.* Thus, what to Horace appeared to be the first faint dawn of Roman literature, appeared to Nævius to be its hapless setting. In truth, one literature was setting and another dawning.

on either side. Bishop Heber heard the children of a village in Bengal singing "Radha, Radha," to the tune of "My boy Billy." Neither the Castilian nor the German minstrels of the middle ages owed anything to Paros or to ancient Rome. Yet both the poem of the Cid and the poem of the Nibelungs contain many Saturnian verses; as,—

"Estas nuvvas a mio Cid eran venidas."
"A mi lo dicen; a ti dan las orejadas."
"Man möote michel wunder von Sifride sagen."
"Wa ich den künic vinde daz sol man mir sagen."

Indeed, there cannot be a more perfect Saturnian line than one which is sung in every English nursery—

"The queen was in her parlor eating bread and honey;"

yet the author of this line, we may be assured, borrowed nothing from either Nævius or Archilochus.

On the other hand, it is by no means improbable that, two or three hundred years before the time of Ennius, some Latin minstrels may have visited Sybaris or Crotona, may have heard some verses of Archilochus sung, may have been pleased with the metre, and may have introduced it at Rome. Thus much is certain, that the Saturnian measure, if not a native of Italy, was at least so early and so completely naturalized there that its foreign origin was forgotten.

Bentley says, indeed, that the Saturnian measure was first brought from Greece into Italy by Nævius. But this is merely *obiter dictum*, to use a phrase common in our courts of law, and would not have been deliberately maintained by that incomparable critic, whose memory is held in reverence by all lovers of learning. The arguments which might be brought against Bentley's assertion—for it is mere assertion, supported by no evidence—are innumerable. A few will suffice.

1. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Ennius. Ennius sneered at Nævius for writing on the First Punic War in verses such as the old Italian bards used before Greek literature had been studied. Now, the poem of Nævius was in Saturnian verse. Is it possible that Ennius could have used such expressions, if the Saturnian verse had been just imported from Greece for the first time?

2. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Horace. "When Greece," says Horace, "introduced her arts into our uncivilized country, those rugged Saturnian numbers passed away." Would Horace have said this, if the Saturnian numbers had been imported from Greece just before the hexameter?

3. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Festus and of Aurelius Victor, both of whom positively say that the most ancient prophecies attributed to the Fauns were in Saturnian verse.

4. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Terentianus Maurus, to whom he has himself appealed. Terentianus Maurus does indeed say that the Saturnian measure, though believed by the Romans from a very early period ("credidit vetustas") to be of Italian invention, was really borrowed from the Greeks. But Terentianus Maurus does not say that it was first borrowed by Nævius. Nay, the expressions used by Terentianus Maurus clearly imply the contrary; for how could the Romans have believed, from a very early period, that this measure was the indigenous production of Latium, if it was really brought over from Greece in an age of intelligence and liberal curiosity,—in the age which gave birth to Ennius, Plautus, Cato the Censor, and other distinguished writers? If Bentley's assertion were correct, there could have been no more doubt at Rome about the Greek origin of the Saturnian measure than about the Greek origin of hexameters or Sapphics.

* Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, i. 34.

The victory of the foreign taste was decisive: and indeed we can hardly blame the Romans for turning away with contempt from the rude lays which had delighted their fathers, and giving their whole admiration to the great productions of Greece. The national romances, neglected by the great and the refined whose education had been finished at Rhodes or Athens, continued, it may be supposed, during some generations, to delight the vulgar. While Virgil, in hexameters of exquisite modulation, described the sports of rustics, those rustics were still singing their wild Saturnian ballads.* It is not improbable that, at the time when Cicero lamented the irreparable loss of the poems mentioned by Cato, a search among the nooks of the Apennines, as active as the search which Sir Walter Scott made among the descendants of the moss-troopers of Liddesdale, might have brought to light many fine remains of ancient minstrelsy. No such search was made. The Latin ballads perished forever. Yet discerning critics have thought that they could still perceive in the early history of Rome numerous fragments of this lost poetry, as the traveller on classic ground sometimes finds, built into the heavy wall of a fort or convent, a pillar rich with acanthus leaves, or a frieze where the Amazons and Bacchanals seem to live. The theatres and temples of the Greek and the Roman were degraded into the quarries of the Turk and the Goth. Even so did the old Saturnian poetry become the quarry in which a crowd of orators and annalists found the materials for their prose.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which the old songs were transmuted into the form which they now wear. Funeral panegyric and chronicle appear to have been the intermediate links which connected the lost ballads with the histories now extant. From a very early period it was the usage that an oration should be pronounced over the remains of a noble Roman. The orator, as we learn from Polybius, was expected, on such an occasion, to recapitulate all the services which the ancestors of the deceased had, from the earliest time, rendered to the commonwealth. There can be little doubt that the speaker on whom this duty was imposed would make use of all the stories suited to his purpose which were to be found in the popular lays. There can be as little doubt that the family of an eminent man would preserve a copy of the speech which had been pronounced over his corpse. The compilers of the early chronicles would have

* See Servius, in Georg. ii. 385.

recourse to these speeches; and the great historians of a later period would have recourse to the chronicles.

It may be worth while to select a particular story, and to trace its probable progress through these stages. The description of the migration of the Fabian house to Cremera is one of the finest of the many fine passages which lie thick in the earlier books of Livy. The Consul, clad in his military garb, stands in the vestibule of his house, marshalling his clan, three hundred and six fighting men, all of the same proud patrician blood, all worthy to be attended by the fasces and to command the legions. A sad and anxious retinue of friends accompanies the adventurers through the streets; but the voice of lamentation is drowned by the shouts of admiring thousands. As the procession passes the Capitol, prayers and vows are poured forth, but in vain. The devoted band, leaving Janus on the right, marches to its doom through the Gate of Evil Luck. After achieving great deeds of valor against overwhelming numbers, all perish save one child, the stock from which the great Fabian race was destined again to spring, for the safety and glory of the commonwealth. That this fine romance, the details of which are so full of poetical truth, and so utterly destitute of all show of historical truth, came originally from some lay which had often been sung with great applause at banquets, is in the highest degree probable. Nor is it difficult to imagine a mode in which the transmission might have taken place. The celebrated Quintus Fabius Maximus, who died about twenty years before the First Punic War, and more than forty years before Ennius was born, is said to have been interred with extraordinary pomp. In the eulogy pronounced over his body all the great exploits of his ancestors were doubtless recounted and exaggerated. If there were then extant songs which gave a vivid and touching description of an event, the saddest and the most glorious in the long history of the Fabian house, nothing could be more natural than that the panegyrist should borrow from such songs their finest touches, in order to adorn his speech. A few generations later the songs would perhaps be forgotten or remembered only by shepherds and vine-dressers. But the speech would certainly be preserved in the archives of the Fabian nobles. Fabius Pictor would be well acquainted with a document so interesting to his personal feelings, and would insert large extracts from it in his rude chronicle. That chronicle, as we know, was the oldest to which Livy

had access. Livy would at a glance distinguish the bold strokes of the forgotten poet from the dull and feeble narrative by which they were surrounded, would retouch them with a delicate and powerful pencil, and would make them immortal.

That this might happen at Rome can scarcely be doubted; for something very like this has happened in several countries, and, among others, in our own. Perhaps the theory of Perizonius cannot be better illustrated than by showing that what he supposes to have taken place in ancient times has, beyond all doubt, taken place in modern times.

"History," says Hume, with the utmost gravity, "has preserved some instances of Edgar's amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest." He then tells very agreeably the stories of Elfleda and Elfrida; two stories which have a most suspicious air of romance, and which, indeed, greatly resemble, in their general character, some of the legends of early Rome. He cites, as his authority for these two tales, the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, who lived in the time of King Stephen. The great majority of readers suppose that the device by which Elfleda was substituted for her young mistress, the artifice by which Athelwold obtained the hand of Elfrida, the detection of that artifice, the hunting party, and the vengeance of the amorous king, are things about which there is no more doubt than about the execution of Anne Boleyn, or the slitting of Sir John Coventry's nose. But, when we turn to William of Malmesbury, we find that Hume, in his eagerness to relate these pleasant fables, has overlooked one very important circumstance. William does indeed tell both the stories; but he gives us distinct notice that he does not warrant their truth, and that they rest on no better authority than that of ballads.*

Such is the way in which these two well known tales have been handed down. They originally appeared in a poetical form. They found their way from ballads into an old chronicle. The ballads perished; the chronicle remained. A great historian, some centuries after the ballads had been altogether forgotten, consulted the chronicle. He was struck by the lively coloring of these ancient fictions; he transferred them to his pages; and thus we find inserted, as unquestionable facts, in a narrative which is likely to last

* "Infamias quas post dicam magis resperserunt cahtilenæ." Edgar appears to have been most mercilessly treated in the Anglo-Saxon ballads. He was the favorite of the monks: and the monks and the minstrels were at deadly feud.

as long as the English tongue, the inventions of some minstrel whose works were probably never committed to writing, whose name is buried in oblivion, and whose dialect has become obsolete. It must then be admitted to be possible, or rather highly probable, that the stories of Romulus and Remus, and of the Horatii and Curiatii, may have had a similar origin.

Castilian literature will furnish us with another parallel case. Mariana, the classical historian of Spain, tells the story of the ill-starred marriage which the King Don Alonso brought about between the heirs of Carrion and the two daughters of the Cid. The Cid bestowed a princely dower on his sons-in-law. But the young men were base and proud, cowardly and cruel. They were tried in danger, and found wanting. They fled before the Moors, and once, when a lion broke out of his den, they ran and couched in an unseemly hiding-place. They knew that they were despised, and took counsel how they might be avenged. They parted from their father-in-law with many signs of love, and set forth on a journey with Doña Elvira and Doña Sol. In a solitary place the bridegrooms seized their brides, stripped them, scourged them, and departed, leaving them for dead. But one of the house of Bivar, suspecting foul play, had followed them in disguise. The ladies were brought back safe to the house of their father. Complaint was made to the king. It was adjudged by the Cortes that the dower given by the Cid should be returned, and that the heirs of Carrion together with one of their kindred should do battle against three knights of the party of the Cid. The guilty youths would have declined the combat; but all their shifts were vain. They were vanquished in the lists, and forever disgraced, while their injured wives were sought in marriage by great princes.*

Some Spanish writers have labored to show, by an examination of dates and circumstances, that this story is untrue. Such confutation was surely not needed; for the narrative is on the face of it a romance. How it found its way into Mariana's history is quite clear. He acknowledges his obligations to the old chronicles, and had doubtless before him the "Cronica del famoso Cavallero Cid Ruy Diez Campeador," which had been printed as early as the year 1552. He little suspected that all the most striking passages in this chronicle were copied from a poem of the

* Mariana, lib. x. cap. 4.

twelfth century, a poem of which the language and versification had long been obsolete, but which glowed with no common portion of the fire of the Iliad. Yet such was the fact. More than a century and a half after the death of Mariana, this grand old ballad, of which one imperfect copy on parchment, four hundred years old, had been preserved at Bivar, was for the first time printed. Then it was found that every interesting circumstance of the story of the heirs of Carrion was derived by the eloquent Jesuit from a song of which he had never heard, and which was composed by a minstrel whose very name had long been forgotten.*

Such, or nearly such, appears to have been the process by which the lost ballad-poetry of Rome was transformed into history. To reverse that process, to transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made, is the object of this work.

In the following poems the author speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels who know only what a Roman citizen, born three or four hundred years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in nowise above the passions and prejudices of their age and country. To these imaginary poets must be ascribed some blunders which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out. The real blunder would have been to represent these old poets as deeply versed in general history, and studious of chronological accuracy. To them must also be attributed the illiberal sneers at the Greeks, the furious party spirit, the contempt for the arts of peace, the love of war for its own sake, the ungenerous exultation over the vanquished, which the reader will sometimes observe. To portray a Roman of the age of Camillus or Curius as superior to national antipathies, as mourning over the devastation and slaughter by which empire and triumphs were to be won, as looking on human suffering with the sympathy of Howard, or as treating conquered enemies with the delicacy of the Black Prince, would be to violate all dramatic propriety. The old Romans had some great virtues,—fortitude, temperance, veracity, spirit to resist oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent

* See the account which Sanchez gives of the Bivar manuscript in the first volume of the *Coleccion de Poesias Castellanas anteriores al Siglo XV.* Part of the story of the Lords of Carrion, in the poem of the Cid, has been translated by Mr. Frere in a manner above all praise.

public spirit; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them.

It would have been obviously improper to mimic the manner of any particular age or country. Something has been borrowed, however, from our own old ballads, and more from Sir Walter Scott, the great restorer of our ballad-poetry. To the Iliad still greater obligations are due; and those obligations have been contracted with the less hesitation because there is reason to believe that some of the old Latin minstrels really had recourse to that inexhaustible store of poetical images.

It would have been easy to swell this little volume to a very considerable bulk, by appending notes filled with quotations; but to a learned reader such notes are not necessary; for an unlearned reader they would have little interest; and the judgment passed both by the learned and by the unlearned on a work of the imagination will always depend much more on the general character and spirit of such a work than on minute details.

HORATIUS.

THERE can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetical origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. We have several versions of the story, and these versions differ from each other in points of no small importance. Polybius, there is reason to believe, heard the tale recited over the remains of some Consul or Prætor descended from the old Horatian patricians; for he evidently introduces it as a specimen of the narratives with which the Romans were in the habit of embellishing their funeral oratory. It is remarkable that, according to his description, Horatius defended the bridge alone, and perished in the waters. According to the chronicles which Livy and Dionysius followed, Horatius had two companions, swam safe to shore, and was loaded with honors and rewards.

These discrepancies are easily explained. Our own literature, indeed, will furnish an exact parallel to what may have taken place at Rome. It is highly probable that the memory of the war of Porsena was preserved by compositions much resembling the two ballads which stand first in the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. In both those ballads the English commanded by the Percy fight with the Scots, commanded by the Douglas. In one of the ballads, the Douglas is killed by a nameless English archer, and the Percy by a Scottish spearman: in the other, the Percy slays the Douglas in single combat, and is himself made prisoner. In the former, Sir Hugh Montgomery is shot through the heart by a Northumbrian bowman: in the latter, he is taken, and exchanged for the Percy. Yet both the ballads relate to the same event, and that an event which probably took place within the memory of persons who

were alive when both the ballads were made. One of the minstrels says:

> "Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
> Call it the battell of Otterburn:
> At Otterburn began this spurne
> Upon a monnyn day
> Ther was the dougghte Doglas slean:
> The Perse never went away."

The other poet sums up the event in the following lines:

> "Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne
> Bytwene the nyghte and the day;
> Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
> And the Percy was lede away."

It is by no means unlikely that there were two old Roman lays about the defence of the bridge; and that, while the story which Livy has transmitted to us was preferred by the multitude, the other, which ascribed the whole glory to Horatius alone, may have been the favorite with the Horatian house.

The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion, however, to the partial manner in which the public lands were allotted could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem, and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus, after the taking of Veii, were regarded.

The penultimate syllable of the name Porsena, has been shortened in spite of the authority of Niebuhr, who pronounces, without assigning any ground for his opinion, that Martial was guilty of a decided blunder in the line,

> "Hanc spectare manum Porsena non potuit."

It is not easy to understand how any modern scholar, whatever his attainments may be,—and those of Niebuhr were undoubtedly immense,—can venture to pronounce that Martial did not know the quantity of a word which he must have uttered and heard uttered a hundred times before he left school. Niebuhr seems also to have forgotten that

Martial has fellow culprits to keep him in countenance. Horace has committed the same decided blunder; for he gives us, as a pure iambic line,

"Minacis aut Etrusca Porsenæ manus."

Silius Italicus has repeatedly offended in the same way, as when he says,

"Cernitur effugiens ardentem Porsena dextram;"

and again,

"Clusinum vulgus, cum, Porsena magne, jubebas."

A modern writer may be content to err in such company.

Niebuhr's supposition that each of the three defenders of the bridge was the representative of one of the three patrician tribes is both ingenious and probable, and has been adopted in the following poem.

HORATIUS.

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX.

1.

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And made his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

2.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

3.

The horsemen and the footmen
  Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place;
  From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
  Which, hid by beach and pine,
Like an eagle's nest hangs on the crest
  Of purple Apennine;

4.

From lordly Volaterræ,
  Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
  For god-like kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
  Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
  Fringing the southern sky;

5.

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
  Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
  Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
  Through corn, and vines, and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
  Her diadem of towers.

6.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
  Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
  Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
  Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
  The great Volsinian mere.

7.

But now no stroke of woodman
  Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
  Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
  Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the water-fowl may dip
  In the Volsinian mere.

8.

The harvests of Arretium
This year old men shall reap;
This year young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls,
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

9.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

10.

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena,
Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome,
And hang round Nurscia's altars
The golden shields of Rome."

11.

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men:
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array,
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

12.

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

13.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways:
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

14.

For aged folk on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves.

15.

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath their weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods
Choked every roaring gate.

16.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

17.

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecote,
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

18.

I wis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Uprose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

19.

They held a council standing
Before the River-gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spoke the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Naught else can save the town."

20.

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear:
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul;
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

21.

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

22.

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

23.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

24.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sate in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

25.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spate towards him and hissed;
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

26.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

27.

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

28.

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

29.

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now, who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

30.

Then out spake Spurius Lartius,
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius,
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

31.

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

32.

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

33.

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold;
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

34.

Now, while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe;
And Fathers mixed with Commons
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

35.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light.
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

36.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that mighty mass;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow pass;

37.

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war.

Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

38.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth;
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

39.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields and slaughtered men
Along Albinia's shore.

40.

Herminius smote down Aruns;
Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accursed sail."

41.

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard amongst the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that mighty mass,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow pass.

42.

But hark! the cry is Astur:
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

43.

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

44.

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

45.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

46.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms he spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

47.

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guest, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

48.

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

49.

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

50.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack;
But those behind cried "Forward!"
And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

51.

Yet one man for one moment
Strode out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud.

"Now welcome, welcome Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
Here lies the road to Rome."

52.

Thrice looked he on the city;
Thrice looked he on the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread;
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

53.

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied,
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruin fall!"

54.

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
Herminius darted back:
And as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

55.

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream:
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

56.

And like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane;

And burst the curb, and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free;
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

57.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
"Now yield thee to our grace."

58.

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

59.

"Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And, with his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

60.

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

61.

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
And he was sore in pain,

And heavy with his armor,
And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

62.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bare bravely up his chin.*

63.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

64.

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;
And now with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

65.

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

* "Our ladye bare upp her chinne."
Ballad of Childe Waters.

"Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force;
* * * * * * *
Yet through good heart and our lady's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place."
Lay of the Last Minstrel. I.

66.

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee;
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

67.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

68.

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within;

69.

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit,
When the chestnuts glow in the embers
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets
And the lads are shaping bows;

70.

When the goodman mends his armor,
And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

THE following poem is supposed to have been produced ninety years after the lay of Horatius. Some persons mentioned in the lay of Horatius make their appearance again, and some appellations and epithets used in the lay of Horatius have been purposely repeated; for, in an age of ballad-poetry, it scarcely ever fails to happen, that certain phrases come to be appropriated to certain men and things, and are regularly applied to those men and things by every minstrel. Thus we find both in the Homeric poems and in Hesiod, *βιη 'Ηζακληειη, περικλυτος' Αμφιγυηεις, διακτοζος' Αζγειφοντης, επταπυλος Θηβη, 'Ελενης 'ενεκ ηυκομιυο.* Thus, too, in our own national songs, Douglas is almost always the doughty Douglas: England is merry England: all the gold is red; and all the ladies are gay.

The principal distinction between the lay of Horatius and the lay of the Lake Regillus is, that the former is meant to be purely Roman, while the latter, though national in its general spirit, has a slight tincture of Greek learning and of Greek superstition. The story of the Tarquins, as it has come down to us, appears to have been compiled from the works of several popular poets; and one, at least, of those poets appears to have visited the Greek colonies in Italy, if not Greece itself, and to have had some acquaintance with the works of Homer and Herodotus. Many of the most striking adventures of the house of Tarquin, till Lucretia makes her appearance, have a Greek character. The Tarquins themselves are represented as Corinthian nobles of the great house of the Bacchiadæ, driven from the country by the tyranny of that Cypselus, the tale of whose strange escape Herodotus has related with incomparable simplicity and

liveliness.* Livy and Dionysius tells us that, when Tarquin the Proud was asked what was the best mode of governing a conquered city, he replied only by beating down with his staff all the tallest poppies in his garden.† This is exactly what Herodotus, in the passage to which reference has already been made, relates of the council given to Periander, the son of Cypselus. The stratagem by which the town of Gabii is brought under the power of the Tarquins is, again, obviously copied from Herodotus.‡ The embassy of the young Tarquins to the oracle at Delphi is just such a story as would be told by a poet whose head was full of the Greek mythology; and the ambiguous answer returned by Apollo is in the exact style of the prophecies which, according to Herodotus, lured Crœsus to destruction. Then the character of the narrative changes. From the first mention of Lucretia to the retreat of Porsena nothing seems to be borrowed from foreign sources. The villany of Sextus, the suicide of his victim, the revolution, the death of the sons of Brutus, the defence of the bridge, Mucius burning his hand, § Clœlia swimming through Tiber, seem to be all strictly Roman. But when we have done with the Tuscan war, and enter upon the war with the Latines, we are again struck by the Greek air of the story. The battle of the Lake Regillus is in all respects a Homeric battle, except that the combatants ride astride on their horses, instead of driving chariots. The mass of fighting men is hardly mentioned. The leaders single each other out, and engage hand to hand. The great object of the warriors on both sides is, as in the Iliad, to obtain possession of the spoils and bodies of the slain; and several circumstances are related which forcibly remind us of the great slaughter round the corpses of Sarpedon and Patroclus.

But there is one circumstance which deserves especial notice. Both the war of Troy and the war of Regillus were caused by the licentious passions of young princes, who were therefore peculiarly bound not to be sparing of their own persons in the day of battle. Now the conduct of Sextus at Regillus, as described by Livy, so exactly resembles that of Paris, as described at the beginning of the third book of the Iliad, that it is difficult to believe the re-

* Herodotus, v. 92. Livy, i. 34. Dionysius, iii. 46.
† Livy, i. 54. Dionysius, iv. 56.
‡ Herodotus, iii. 154. Livy, i. 53.
§ M. de Pouilly attempted, a hundred and twenty years ago, to prove that the story of Mucius was of Greek origin; but he was signally confuted by the Abbé Sallier. See the *Mémoires de l' Academie des Inscriptions*, vi. 27 66.

semblance accidental. Paris appears before the Trojan ranks, defying the bravest Greek to encounter him :

> Τρωσιν μεν προμαχιζεν' Αλεξανδρος θεοειδης,
> . . . . . Ἀργειων προκαλιζετο παντας αριστους,
> αντιβιον μαχεσασθαι εν αινη δηιοτητι.

Livy introduces Sextus in a similar manner : " Ferocem iuvenem Tarquinium ostentanten se in primâ exsulum acie.' Menelaus rushes to meet Paris. A Roman noble, eager for vengeance, spurs his horse towards Sextus. Both the guilty princes are instantly terror-stricken :

> Τον δ' ως ουν ενοησεν Αλεξανδρος θεοειδης,
> εν προμαχοισι φανεντα, κατεπληγη φιλον ητορ,
> αψ δ' εταρων εις εθνος εχαζετο κηρ αλεεινων.

" Tarquinius," says Livy, " retro in agmen suorum infenso cessit hosti." If this be a fortuitous coincidence, it is one of the most extraordinary in literature.

In the following poem, therefore, images and incidents have been borrowed, not merely without scruple, but on principle, from the incomparable battle-pieces of Homer.

The popular belief at Rome, from an early period seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it was said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterwards carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honor on the Ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle ; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock ; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

How the legend originated, cannot now be ascertained : but we may easily imagine several ways in which it might have originated : nor is it at all necessary to suppose, with Julius Frontinus, that two young men were dressed up by the Dictator to personate the sons of Leda. It is probable that Livy is correct when he says that the Roman general, in the hour of peril, vowed a temple to Castor. If so, nothing could be more natural than that the multitude should

ascribe the victory to the favor of the Twin Gods. When such was the prevailing sentiment, any man who chose to declare that, in the midst of the confusion and slaughter, he had seen two godlike forms on white horses scattering the Latines, would find ready credence. We know, indeed, that, in modern times, a very similar story actually found credence among a people much more civilized than the Romans of the fifth century before Christ. A chaplain of Cortes, writing about thirty years after the conquest of Mexico, in an age of printing-presses, libraries, universities, scholars, logicians, jurists, and statesmen, had the face to assert that, in one engagement against the Indians, St. James had appeared on a gray horse at the head of the Castilian adventurers. Many of these adventurers were living when this lie was printed. One of them, honest Bernal Diaz, wrote an account of the expedition. He had the evidence of his own senses against the chaplain's legend; but he seems to have distrusted even the evidence of his own senses. He says that he was in the battle, and that he saw a gray horse, with a man on his back, but that the man was, to his thinking, Francesco de Moria, and not the ever-blessed apostle St. James. "Nevertheless," he adds, "it may be that the person on the gray horse was the glorious apostle St. James, and that I, sinner that I am, was unworthy to see him." The Romans of the age of Cincinnatus were probably quite as credulous as the Spanish subjects of Charles the Fifth. It is therefore conceivable that the appearance of Castor and Pollux may have become an article of faith before the generation which had fought at Regillus had passed away. Nor could anything be more natural than that the poets of the next age should embellish this story, and make the celestial horsemen bear the tidings of victory to Rome.

Many years after the Temple of the Twin Gods had been built in the Forum, an important addition was made to the ceremonial by which the state annually testified its gratitude for their protection. Quintus Fabius and Publius Decius were elected Censors at a momentous crisis. It had become absolutely necessary that the classification of the citizens should be revised. On that classification depended the distribution of political power. Party spirit ran high; and the republic seemed to be in danger of falling under the dominion either of a narrow oligarchy or of an ignorant and headstrong rabble. Under such circumstances, the most illustrious patrician and the most illustrious plebeian of the

age were intrusted with the office of arbitrating between the angry factions; and they performed their arduous task to the satisfaction of all honest and reasonable men.

One of their reforms was a remodelling of the equestrian order; and, having effected this reform, they determined to give to their work a sanction derived from religion. In the chivalrous societies of modern times, societies which have much more than may at first sight appear in common with the equestrian order of Rome, it has been usual to invoke the special protection of some Saint, and to observe this day with peculiar solemnity. Thus the companions of the Garter wear the image of St. George depending from their collars, and meet, on great occasions, in St. George's Chapel. Thus, when Louis the Fourteenth instituted a new order of chivalry for the rewarding of military merit, he commended it to the favor of his own glorified ancestor and patron, and decreed that all the members of the fraternity should meet at the royal palace on the Feast of St. Louis, should attend the King to Chapel, should hear mass, and should subsequently hold their great annual assembly. There is a considerable resemblance between this rule of the Order of St. Louis and the rule which Fabius and Decius made respecting the Roman knights. It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body should be part of the ceremonial performed, on the anniversary of the battle of Regillus, in honor of Castor and Pollux, the two equestrian Gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at a Temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the temple of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. In the time of Dionysius the cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune.*

There can be no doubt that the Censors who instituted this magnificent ceremony acted in concert with the Pontiffs to whom, by the constitution of Rome, the superintendence of the public worship belonged; and it is probable that those high religious functionaries were, as usual, fortunate enough to find in their books or traditions some warrant for the innovation.

* See Livy, ix. 46. Val. Max., ii. 2. Aurel. Vict. De Viris Illustribus, 32. Dionysius, vi. 13. Plin. Hist. Nat. xv. 5. See also the singularly ingenious chapter in Niebuhr's posthumous volume, *Die Censur dis Q. Fabius und P. Decius.*

The following poem is supposed to have been made for this great occasion. Songs, we know, were chanted at the religious festivals of Rome from an early period, indeed from so early a period that some of the sacred verses were popularly ascribed to Numa, and were utterly unintelligible in the age of Augustus. In the second Punic War a great feast was held in honor of Juno, and a song was sung in her praise. This song was extant when Livy wrote; and, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, seemed to him not wholly destitute of merit.* A song, as we learn from Horace, was part of the established ritual at the great Secular Jubilee.† It is therefore likely that the Censors and Pontiffs, when they had resolved to add a grand procession of knights to the other solemnities annually performed on the Ides of Quintilis, would call in the aid of a poet. Such a poet would naturally take for his subject the battle of Regillus, the appearance of the Twin Gods, and the institution of their festival. He would find abundant materials in the ballads of his predecessors; and he would make free use of the scanty stock of Greek learning which he had himself acquired. He would probably introduce some wise and holy Pontiff enjoining the magnificent ceremonial which, after a long interval, had at length been adopted. If the poem succeeded, many persons would commit it to memory. Parts of it would be sung to the pipe at banquets. It would be peculiarly interesting to the great Posthumian house, which numbered among its many images that of the Dictator Aulus, the hero of Regillus. The orator who, in the following generation, pronounced the funeral panegyric over the remains of Lucius Posthumius Megellus, thrice Consul, would borrow largely from the lay; and thus some passages, much disfigured, would probably find their way into the chronicles which were afterwards in the hands of Dionysius and Livy.

Antiquaries differ widely as to the situation of the field of battle. The opinion of those who suppose that the armies met near Cornufelle, between Frascati and the Monte Porzio, is, at least, plausible, and has been followed in the poem.

As to the details of the battle, it has not been thought desirable to adhere minutely to the accounts which have come down to us. Those accounts, indeed, differ widely from each other, and, in all probability, differ as widely

* Livy, xxvi. 37. † Hor. Carmen Seculare.

from the ancient poem from which they were originally derived.

It is unnecessary to point out the obvious indications of the Iliad, which have been purposely introduced.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND POLLUX ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLI.

1.

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride in all their pride,
Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum,
To Mars without the wall.
Each knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crown'd;
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintillis
Shall have such honor still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
December's Nones are gay.
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day.

2.

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
We keep this solemn feast.
Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
Came spurring from the east.
They came o'er wild Parthenius
Tossing in waves of pine,
O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
O'er purple Apennine,
From where with flutes and dances
Their ancient mansion rings,

In lordly Lacedæmon,
The City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum,
Was fought the glorious fight

3.

Now on the place of slaughter
Are cots and sheepfolds seen,
And rows of vines, and fields of wheat,
And apple-orchards green.
The swine crush the big acorns
That fall from Corne's oaks;
Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
The reaper's pottage smokes.
The fisher baits his angle;
The hunter twangs his bow;
Little they think on those strong limbs
That moulder deep below.
Little they think how sternly
That day the trumpets pealed;
How in the slippery swamp of blood
Warrior and war-horse reeled;
How wolves came with fierce gallop,
And crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
And peck the eyes of kings;
How thick the dead lay scattered
Under the Porcian height;
How through the gates of Tusculum
Raved the wild stream of flight;
And how the Lake Regillus
Bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities
Came forth to war with Rome.

4.

But, Roman, when thou standest
Upon that holy ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock
That girds the dark lake round.
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
Stamped deep into the flint:
It was no hoof of mortal steed
That made so strange a dint:
There to the Great Twin Brethren
Vow thou thy vows, and pray
That they, in tempest and in fight,
Will keep thy head away.

5.

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
Of mortal eyes were seen,
Have years gone by a hundred
And fourscore and thirteen.
That summer a Virginius
Was Consul first in place;
The second was stout Aulus,
Of the Posthumian race.
The Herald of the Latines
From Gabii came in state:
The Herald of the Latines
Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate:
The Herald of the Latines
Did in our Forum stand;
And there he did his office,
A sceptre in his hand.

6.

"Hear, Senators and people
Of the good town of Rome:
The Thirty Cities charge you
To bring the Tarquins home:
And if ye still be stubborn,
To work the Tarquins wrong,
The Thirty Cities warn you,
Look that your walls be strong."

7.

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
He spake a bitter jest;
"Once the jays sent a message
Unto the eagle's nest:—
Now yield thou up thine eyrie
Unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face
The jays in deadly fight.—
Forth looked in wrath the eagle;
And carrion-kite and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
Fled screaming far away."

8.

The Herald of the Latines
Hath hied him back in state:
The fathers of the City
Are met in high debate.
Then spake the elder Consul,
An ancient man and wise:
"Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
To that which I advise.

In seasons of great peril
'Tis good that one bear sway;
Then choose we a Dictator,
Whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply
The sword of Aulus bites;
And all our city calls him
The man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator
For six months and no more,
And have a master of the Knights,
And axes twenty-four."

9.

So Aulus was Dictator,
The man of seventy fights;
He made Æbutius Elva
His Master of the Knights,
On the third morn thereafter,
At dawning of the day,
Did Aulus and Æbutius
Set forth with their array.
Sepronius Atratinus
Was left in charge at home
With boys and with gray-headed men,
To keep the walls of Rome.
Hard by the Lake Regillus
Our camp was pitched at night;
Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
Under the Porcian height.
Far over hill and valley
Their mighty host was spread;
And with their thousand watchfires
The midnight sky was red.

10.

Up rose the golden morning
Over the Porcian height,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Marked evermore with white.
Not without secret trouble
Our bravest saw the foes,
For, girt by threescore thousand spears,
The thirty standards rose.
From every warlike city
That boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
That gallant army came;
From Setia's purple vineyards,
From Norba's ancient wall,
From the white streets of Tusculum,
The proudest town of all;

From where the Witch's Fortress
O'erhangs the dark-blue seas,
From the still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia's trees—
Those trees in whose dim shadow
The ghastly priest doth reign,
The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain ;—
From the drear banks of Ufens,
Where flights of marsh-fowl play,
And buffaloes lie wallowing
Through the hot summer's day ;
From the gigantic watch-towers,
No work of earthly men,
Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
The never-ending fen ;
From the Laurentian jungle,
The wild hog's reedy home,
From the green steps whence Anio leaps
In floods of snow-white foam.

11.

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
Velitræ, with the might
Of Setia and of Tusculum,
Were marshalled on their right :
Their leader was Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name ;
Upon his head a helmet
Of red gold shone like flame :
High on a gallant charger
Of dark-gray hue he rode ;
Over his gilded armor
A vest of purple flowed,
Woven in the land of sunrise
By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
And by the sails of Carthage brought
Far o'er the southern waters.

12.

Lavinium and Circeium
Had on the left their post,
With all the banners of the marsh,
And banners of the coast.
Their leader was false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame :
With restless pace and haggard face
To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions,
Which none beside might see ;
And that strange sounds were in his ears,
Which none might hear but he.

A woman fair and stately,
But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
Sate spinning by his bed.
And as she plied the distaff,
In a sweet voice and low,
She sang of great old houses
And fights fought long ago.
So spun she and so sung she,
Until the east was gray;
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
And shrieked, and fled away.

13.

But in the centre thickest
Were ranged the shields of foes,
And from the centre loudest
The cry of battle rose.
There Tibur marched and Pedum
Beneath proud Tarquin's rule,
And Ferentinum of the rock,
And Gabii of the pool.
There rode the Volscian succors:
There, in a dark, stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close
Around the ancient king.
Though white as Mount Soracte,
When winter nights are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt,
His heart and hand were strong;
Under his hoary eyebrows
Still flashed forth quenchless rage;
And if the lance shook in his gripe,
'Twas more with hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus
On an Apulian steed,
Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
Too good for such a breed.

14.

Now on each side the leaders
Gave signal for the charge;
And on each side the footmen
Strode on with lance and targe;
And on each side the horsemen
Struck their spurs deep in gore,
And front to front the armies
Met with a mighty roar:
And under that great battle
The earth with blood was red;
And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
The dust hung ovehead;

And louder still and louder
Rose from the darkened field
The braying of the war-horns,
The clang of sword and shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping
Like whirlwinds o'er the plain,
The shouting of the slayers,
And screeching of the slain.

15.

False Sextus rode out foremost:
His look was high and bold;
His corslet was of bison's hide,
Plated with steel and gold.
As glares the famished eagle
From the Digentian rock,
On a choice lamb that bounds alone
Before Bandusia's flock,
Herminius glared on Sextus,
And came with eagle speed;
Herminius on black Auster,
Brave champion on brave steed.
In his right hand the broadsword
That kept the bridge so well,
And on his helm the crown he won
When proud Fidenæ fell.
Wo to the maid whose lover
Shall cross his path to-day!
False Sextus saw, and trembled,
And turned, and fled away.
As turns, as flies, the woodman
In the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the round eye
Of that fell painted snake;
So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
And hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
Bristling with crest and spear.

16.

Then far to North Æbutius,
The Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba
To feed the Porcian kites.
Next under those red horse-hoofs
Flaccus of Setia lay;
Better had he been pruning
Among his elms that day.
Mamilius saw the slaughter,
And tossed his golden crest,
And towards the Master of the Knights
Through the thick battle pressed.
Æbutius smote Mamilius
So fiercely on the shield,

That the great lord of Tusculum
Wellnigh rolled on the field.
Mamilius smote Æbutius,
With a good aim and true,
Just where the neck and shoulder join,
And pierced him through and through;
And brave Æbutius Elva
Fell swooning to the ground:
But a thick wall of bucklers
Encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space;
And filled a helm from the dark lake,
And bathed his brow and face;
And when at last he opened
His swimming eyes to light,
Men say, the earliest word he spake
Was, "Friends, how goes the fight?"

17.

But meanwhile in the centre
Great deeds of arms were wrought;
There Aulus the Dictator,
And there Valerius fought.
Aulus with his good broadsword,
A bloody passage cleared
To where, amidst the thickest foes,
He saw the long white beard.
Flat lighted that good broadsword
Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance: he dropped the reins:
He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him,
With eyes like coals of fire;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
Fast down to earth they spring;
And hand to hand they fight on foot
Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Cæso
A death wound in the face;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man
Of the brave Fabian race;
Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
The priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius,
Of Rome's great Julian line;
Julius, who left his mansion
High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and wo
Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin
A corpse was Julius laid:

And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
  And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
  And lopped off half his crest;
But Titus stabbed Valerius
  A span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
  Valerius reeled and fell.
Ah! wo is me for the good house
  That loves the people well!
Then shouted loud the Latines;
  And with one rush they bore
The struggling Romans backward
  Three lances' length and more:
And up they took proud Tarquin,
  And laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him,
  Still senseless, from the field.

18.

But fiercer grew the fighting
  Around Valerius dead;
For Titus dragged him by the foot,
  And Aulus by the head.
"On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus,
  "See how the rebels fly!"
"Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus,
  "And win this fight or die!
They must not give Valerius
  To raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
  And aye upheld the right:
And for your wives and babies
  In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
  That loves the people well!"

19.

Then tenfold round the body
  The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest,
  When a strong north wind blows.
Now backward, and now forward,
  Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
  And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
  Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
  That writhed and gnawed the ground;
And wounded horses kicking,
  And snorting purple foam:
Right well did such a couch befit
  A Consular of Rome.

20.

But north looked the Dictator;
North looked he long and hard;
And spake to Caius Cossus,
The Captain of his Guard:
"Caius, of all the Romans
Thou hast the keenest sight;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust
Comes from the Latian right?"

21.

Then answered Caius Cossus:
"I see an evil sight;
The banner of proud Tusculum
Comes from the Latian right;
I see the plumed horsemen;
And far before the rest
I see the dark-gray charger,
I see the purple vest;
I see the golden helmet
That shines far off like flame;
So ever rides Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name."

22.

"Now hearken, Caius Cossus:
Spring on thy horse's back;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine
Were all upon thy track;
Haste to our southward battle:
And never draw thy rein
Until thou find Herminius,
And bid him come amain."

23.

So Aulus spake, and turned him
Again to that fierce strife;
And Caius Cossus mounted,
And rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
The helmets of the dead,
And many a curdling pool of blood
Splashed him from heel to head.
So came he far to southward,
Where fought the Roman host,
Against the banners of the marsh
And banners of the coast.
Like corn before the sickle
The stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword
That kept the bridge so well.

24.

"Herminius! Aulus greets thee;
He bids thee come with speed,
To help our central battle;
For sore is there our need.
There wars the youngest Tarquin,
And there the Crest of Flame,
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.
Valerius hath fallen fighting
In front of our array,
And Aulus of the seventy fields
Alone upholds the day."

25.

Herminius beat his bosom,
But never a word he spake:
He clapped his hands on Auster's mane;
He gave the reins a shake.
Away, away went Auster
Like an arrow from the bow;
Black Auster was the fleetest steed
From Aufidus to Po.

26.

Right glad were all the Romans
Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
Around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering
Rose with a mighty swell,—
"Herminius comes, Herminius,
Who kept the bridge so well!"

27.

Mamilius spied Herminius,
And dashed across the way.
"Herminius! I have sought thee
Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
Shall never more go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum,
And lay thou on for Rome!"

28.

All round them paused the battle,
While met in mortal fray
The Roman and the Tusculan,
The horses black and gray.
Herminius smote Mamilius
Through breastplate and through breast,
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.

Mamilius smote Herminius
Through headpiece and through head,
And side by side those chiefs of pride
Together fell down dead.
Down fell they dead together
In a great lake of gore;
And still stood all who saw them fall
While men might count a score.

29.

Fast, fast with heels wild spurning,
The dark-gray charger fled;
He burst through ranks of fighting men,
He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
His bridle far out-streaming,
His flanks all blood and foam,
He sought the southern mountains,
The mountains of his home.
The pass was steep and rugged,
The wolves they howled and whined;
But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
And he left the wolves behind.
Through many a startled hamlet
Thundered his flying feet:
He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
He rushed up the long white street;
He rushed by tower and temple,
And paused not from his race
Till he stood before his master's door
In the stately market-place.
And straightway round him gathered
A pale and trembling crowd,
And when they knew him cries of rage
Break forth, and wailing loud:
And women rent their tresses
For their great prince's fall:
And old men girt on their old swords,
And went to man the wall.

30.

But, like a graven image,
Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
Into his master's face.
The raven-mane that daily,
With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed,
And twined in even tresses,
And decked with colored ribands
From her own gay attire,
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
In carnage and in mire.

Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
And seized black Auster's rein,
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath,
And ran at him amain.
"The furies of thy brother
With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house
Upon black Auster ride!"
As on an Alpine watch-tower
From Heaven comes down the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
The blade of Aulus came:
And out the red-blood spouted,
In a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court
Of some rich Capuan's hall.
The knees of all the Latines
Were loosened with dismay
When dead, on dead Herminius,
The bravest Tarquin lay.

31.

And Aulus the Dictator
Stroked Auster's raven mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths,
With heed unto the rein.
Now bear me well, Black Auster,
Into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge
For thy good lord this day."

32

So spake he; and was buckling
Tighter Black Auster's band,
When he was aware of a princely pair
That rode at his right hand.
So like they were, no mortal
Might one from other know:
White as snow their armor was:
Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
Did such rare armor gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds
Drink of an earthly stream.

33.

And all who saw them trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Aulus the Dictator
Scarce gathered voice to speak.
"Say by what name men call you?
What city is your home?
And wherefore ride ye in such guise
Before the ranks of Rome?"

34.

"By many names men call us;
In many lands we dwell:
Well Samothracia knows us:
Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum
Is hung each morn with flowers:
High o'er the masts of Syracuse
Our marble portal towers:
But by the proud Eurotas
Is our dear native home;
And for the right we come to fight
Before the ranks of Rome."

35.

So answered those strange horsemen,
And each couched low his spear;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome
Were bold, and of good cheer:
And on the thirty armies
Came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left,
And Cora on the right.
"Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus;
"The foe begins to yield!
Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
Charge for the Golden Shield!
Let no man stop to plunder,
But slay, and slay, and slay:
The gods who live for ever
Are on our side to-day."

36.

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish
From earth to heaven arose,
The kites know well the long stern swell
That bids the Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus
Was lifted up to slay:
Then, like a crag down Apennine,
Rushed Auster through the fray.
But under those strange horsemen
Still thicker lay the slain;
And after those strange horses
Black Auster toiled in vain.
Behind them Rome's long battle
Came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above,
Blades all in line below.
So comes the Po in flood-time
Upon the Celtic plain:
So comes the squall, blacker than night,
Upon the Adrian main.

Now, by our Sire Quirinius,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Sweep down the tide of flight.
So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow;
So corn sheaves in the flood-time
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head:
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Circeium fled.
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray;
The footmen of Velitræ
Threw spear and shield away.
And underfoot was trampled,
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banners of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before:
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks
From where the apple blossoms wave
On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
Chief of the Volscian aids,
And Metius with the long fair curls,
The lover of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
The hunter of the deer;
And in the back false Sextus
Felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died,
Like a worm beneath the wheel:
And fliers and pursuers
Were mingled in a mass;
And far away the battle
Went roaring through the pass.

37.

Sempronius Atratinus
Sate in the Eastern gate.
Beside him were three Fathers,
Each in his chair of state;
Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons
That day were in the field,
And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve
Who keep the Golden Shield;
And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
For wisdom far renowned;
In all Etruria's colleges
Was no such Pontiff found.

And all around the portal,
And high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people,
But sad and silent all;
Young lads, and stooping elders
That might not bear the mail,
Matrons with lips that quivered,
And maids with faces pale.
Since the first gleam of daylight,
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east.
The mist of eve was rising,
The sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair
Fast pricking towards the town.
So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armor was,
Their steeds were red with gore.

38.

"Hail to the great Asylum!
Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
And the shield that fell from heaven!
This day, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum,
Was fought a glorious fight.
To-morrow your Dictator
Shall bring in triumph home
The spoils of thirty cities
To deck the shrines of Rome!"

39.

Then burst from that great concourse
A shout that shook the towers,
And some ran north and some ran south,
Crying, "The day is ours!"
But on rode these strange horsemen,
With slow and lordly pace;
And none who saw their bearing
Durst ask their name or race.
On rode they to the Forum,
While laurel-boughs and flowers,
From house-tops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers.
When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,
And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

40.

And all the people trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Sergius the High Pontiff
Alone found voice to speak:
"The Gods who live for ever
Have fought for Rome to-day!
These be the Great Twin Brethren
To whom the Dorians pray.
Back comes the Chief in triumph,
Who in the hour of fight,
Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
In harness on his right.
Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses
In Vesta's holy well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door,
I know, but may not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's temple,
Build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome.
And when the months returning
Bring back this day of fight,
The proud Ides of Quintilis,
Marked evermore with white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings,
With music and with song;
And let the doors and windows
Be hung with garlands all,
And let the Knights be summoned
To Mars without the wall:
Thence let them ride in purple
With joyous trumpet-sound,
Each mounted on his war-horse,
And each with olive crowned;
And pass in solemn order
Before the sacred dome,
Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome."

VIRGINIA.

A COLLECTION consisting exclusively of war-songs would give an imperfect, or rather an erroneous notion of the spirit of the old Latin ballads. The Patricians during about a century and a half after the expulsion of the kings, held all the high military commands. A Plebeian, even though, like Lucius Siccius, he were distinguished by his valor and knowledge of war, could serve only in subordinate posts. A minstrel, therefore, who wished to celebrate the early triumphs of his country, could hardly take any but Patricians for his heroes. The warriors who are mentioned in the two preceding lays, Horatius, Lartius, Herminius, Aulus Posthumius Æbutius Elva, Sempronius Atratinus, Valerius Poplicola, were all members of the dominant order; and a poet who was singing their praises, whatever his own political opinions might be, would naturally abstain from insulting the class to which they belonged, and from reflecting on the system which had placed such men at the head of the legions of the commonwealth.

But there was a class of compositions in which the great families were by no means so courteously treated. No parts of early Roman history are richer with poetical coloring than those which relate to the long contest between the privileged houses and the commonalty. The population of Rome was, from a very early period, divided into hereditary casts, which, indeed, readily united to repel foreign enemies, but which regarded each other, during many years, with bitter animosity. Between those castes there was a barrier hardly less strong than that which, at Venice, parted the members of the Great Council from their countrymen. In some respects indeed, the line which separated an Icilius or a Duilius from a Posthumius or a Fabius was even more

deeply marked than that which separated the rower of a gondola from a Contarini or a Morosini. At Venice the distinction was merely civil. At Rome it was both civil and religious. Among the grievances under which the Plebeians suffered, three were felt as peculiarly severe. They were excluded from the highest magistracies; they were excluded from all share in the public lands; and they were ground down to the dust by partial and barbarous legislation touching pecuniary contracts. The ruling class in Rome was a moneyed class; and it made and administered the laws with a view solely to its own interest. Thus the relation between lender and borrower was mixed up with the relation between sovereign and subject. The great men held a large portion of the community in dependence by means of advances at enormous usury. The law of debt, framed by creditors, and for the protection of creditors, was the most horrible that has ever been known among men. The liberty, and even the life, of the insolvent were at the mercy of the Patrician money-lenders. Children often became slaves in consequence of the misfortunes of their parents. The debtor was imprisoned, not in a public jail under the care of impartial public functionaries, but in a private workhouse belonging to the creditor. Frightful stories were told respecting these dungeons. It was said that torture and brutal violation were common; that tight stocks, heavy chains, scanty measures of food, were used to punish wretches guilty of nothing but poverty; and that brave soldiers, whose breasts were covered with honorable scars, were often marked still more deeply on the back by the scourges of high-born usurers.

The Plebeians were, however, not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. They were enrolled in the centuries, and were allowed a share, considerable though not proportioned to their numerical strength, in the disposal of those high dignities from which they were themselves excluded. Thus their position bore some resemblance to that of the Irish Catholics during the interval between the year 1792 and the year 1829. The Plebeians had also the privilege of annually appointing officers, named Tribunes, who had no active share in the government of the Commonwealth, but who, by degrees, acquired a power which made them formidable even to the ablest and most resolute Consuls and Dictators. The person of the Tribune

was inviolable; and, though he could directly effect little, he could obstruct everything.

During more than a century after the institution of the Tribuneship, the Commons struggled manfully for the removal of grievances under which they labored; and, in spite of many checks and reverses, succeeded in wringing concession after concession from the stubborn aristocracy. At length, in the year of the city 378, both parties mustered their whole strength for their last and most desperate conflict. The popular and active Tribune, Caius Licinius, proposed the three memorable laws which are called by his name, and which were intended to redress the three great evils of which the Plebeians complained. He was supported, with eminent ability and firmness, by his colleague, Lucius Sextius. The struggle appears to have been the fiercest that ever in any community terminated without an appeal to arms. If such a contest had raged in any Greek city, the streets would have run with blood. But, even in the paroxysms of faction, the Roman retained his gravity, his respect for law, and his tenderness for the lives of his fellow-citizens. Year after year Licinius and Sextius were re-elected Tribunes. Year after year, if the narrative which has come down to us is to be trusted, they continued to exert, to the full extent, their power of stopping the whole machine of government. No curle magistrates could be chosen; no military muster could be held. We know too little of the state of Rome in those days to be able to conjecture how, during that long anarchy, the peace was kept, and ordinary justice administered between man and man. The animosity of both parties rose to the greatest height. The excitement, we may well suppose, would have been peculiarly intense at the annual election of Tribunes. On such occasions there can be little doubt that the great families did all that could be done, by threats and caresses, to break the union of the Plebeians. That union, however, proved indissoluble. At length the good cause triumphed. The Licinian laws were carried. Lucius Sextius was the first Plebeian Consul, Caius Licinius the third.

The results of this great change were singularly happy and glorious. Two centuries of prosperity, harmony, and victory followed the reconciliation of the orders. Men who remembered Rome engaged in waging petty wars almost within sight of the Capitol lived to see her the mistress of Italy. While the disabilities of the Plebeians continued,

she was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon.

During the great Licinian contest the Plebeian poets were, doubtless, not silent. Even in modern times songs have been by no means without influence on public affairs; and we may therefore infer, that, in a society where printing was unknown, and where books were rare, a pathetic or humorous party-ballad must have produced effects such as we can but faintly conceive. It is certain that satirical poems were common at Rome from a very early period. The rustics who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and took little part in the strife of factions, gave vent to their petty local animosities in coarse Fescennine verse. The lampoons of the city were doubtless of a higher order; and their sting was early felt by the nobility. For in the twelve Tables, long before the time of the Licinian laws, a severe punishment was denounced against the citizen who should compose or recite verses reflecting on another.* Satire is, indeed the only sort of composition in which the Latin poets, whose works have come down to us, were not mere imitators of foreign models; and it is therefore the only sort of composition in which they had never been rivalled. It was not, like their tragedy, their comedy, their epic and lyric poetry, a hot-house plant which, in return for assiduous and skilful culture, yielded only scanty and sickly fruits. It was hardy, and full of sap; and in all the various juices which it yielded might be distinguished the flavor of the Ausonian soil. "Satire," said Quintilian, with just pride, "is all our own." It sprang, in truth, naturally from the constitution of the Roman government and from the spirit of the Roman people; and, though it submitted to metrical rules derived from Greece, it retained to the last its essentially Roman character. Lucilius was the earliest satirist whose works were held in esteem under the Cæsars. But, many years before Lucilius was born, Nævius had been flung into a dungeon, and guarded there with circumstances of unusual rigor till the Tribunes interfered in his behalf, on account of the bitter lines in which he had attacked the great Cæcilian

* Cicero justly infers from this law that there had been early Latin poets whose works had been lost before his time. "Quam-quam id quidem etiam xii tabulæ declarant; condi jam tum solitum esse carmen, quod ne liceret fieri ad alterius injuriam lege sanxerunt."—*Tusc.* iv. 2.

family.* The genius and spirit of the Roman satirists survived the liberties of their country, and were not extinguished by the cruel despotism of the Julian and Flavian emperors. The great poet who told the story of Domitian's turbot was the legitimate successor of those forgotten minstrels whose songs animated the factions of the infant Republic.

Those minstrels, as Niebuhr has remarked, appear to have generally taken the popular side. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that, at the great crisis of the civil conflict, they employed themselves in versifying all the most powerful and virulent speeches of the Tribunes, and in heaping abuse on the chiefs of the aristocracy. Every personal defect, every domestic scandal, every tradition dishonorable to a noble house, would be sought out, brought into notice, and exaggerated. The illustrious head of the aristocratical party, Marcus Furius Camillus, might perhaps be, in some measure, protected by his venerable age and by the memory of his great services to the state. But Appius Claudius Crassus enjoyed no such immunity. He was descended from a long line of ancestors distinguished by their haughty demeanor, and by the inflexibility with which they had withstood all the demands of the Plebeian order. While the political conduct and deportment of the Claudian nobles drew upon them the fiercest public hatred, they were wanting, if any credit is due to the early history of Rome, in a class of qualities which, in a military Commonwealth, is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences. Several of them appear to have been eloquent, versed in civil business, and learned after the fashion of their age; but in war they were not distinguished by skill or valor. Some of them, as if conscious where their weakness lay, had, when filling the highest magistracies, taken internal administration as their department of public business, and left the military command to their colleagues.† One of them had been intrusted with an army, and had failed ignominiously.‡ None of them had been honored with a triumph. None of them had achieved any martial exploit, such as those by which Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, Titus Quinctius Capitolinus, Aulus Cornelius Cossus, and, above all, the great Camillus, had extorted the reluctant esteem of the multitude. During the Licinian conflict, Appius Claudius Crassus signalized himself by the ability and severity with

* Plautus, Miles Gloriosus. Aulus Gellius iii. 3.
† In the years of the city 260, 304, and 330.
‡ In the year of the city 282.

which he harangued against the two great agitators. He would naturally, therefore, be the favorite mark of the Plebeian satirists; nor would they have been at a loss to find a point on which he was open to attack.

His grandfather, named like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. He had been Consul more than seventy years before the introduction of the Licinian laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the Commons to the abolition of the Tribuneship, and had been the chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the State had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It was swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury; and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius on the chastity of a beautiful young girl of humble birth. The story ran, that the Decemvir, unable to succeed by bribes and solicitations, resorted to an outrageous act of tyranny. A vile dependent of the Claudian house laid claim to the damsel as his slave. The cause was brought before the tribunal of Appius. The wicked magistrate, in defiance of the clearest proofs, gave judgment for the claimant; but the girl's father, a brave soldier, saved her from servitude and dishonor by stabbing her to the heart in the sight of the whole Forum. That blow was the signal for a general explosion. Camp and city rose at once; the Ten were pulled down; the Tribuneship was re-established; and Appius escaped the hands of the executioner only by a voluntary death.

It can hardly be doubted that a story so admirably adapted to the purposes both of the poet and of the demagogue would be eagerly seized upon by minstrels burning with hatred against the Patrician order, against the Claudian house, and especially against the grandson and namesake of the infamous Decemvir.

In order that the reader may judge fairly of these fragments of the lay of Virginia, he must imagine himself a Plebeian who has just voted for the re-election of Sextius and Licinius. All the power of the Patricians has been exerted to throw out the two great champions of the Commons. Every Posthumius, Æmilius, and Cornelius has used his influence to the utmost. Debtors have been let out of the

workhouses on condition of voting against the men of the people; clients have been posted to hiss and interrupt the favorite candidates; Appius Claudius Crassus has spoken with more than his usual eloquence and asperity; all has been in vain; Licinius and Sextius have a fifth time carried all the tribes; work is suspended; the booths are closed; the Plebeians bear on their shoulders the two champions of liberty through the Forum. Just at this moment it is announced that a popular poet, a zealous adherent of the Tribunes, has made a new song which will cut the Claudian family to the heart. The crowd gathers round him, and calls on him to recite it. He takes his stand on the spot where, according to tradition, Virginia, more than seventy years ago, was seized by the pander of Appius, and he begins his story.

VIRGINIA.

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE FORUM ON THE DAY WHEREON LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERANUS AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS STOLO WERE ELECTED TRIBUNES OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLXXXII.

Ye good men of the Commons, with loving hearts and true,
Who stand by the bold Tribunes that still have stood by you,
Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne; of what Rome yet may bear.
This is no Grecian fable, of fountains running wine,
Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors turned to swine.
Here, in this very Forum, under the noonday sun,
In sight of all the people, the bloody deed was done.
Old men still creep among us who saw that fearful day,
Just seventy years and seven ago, when the wicked Ten bare sway.

Of all the wicked Ten still the names are held accursed,
And of all the wicked Ten, Appius Claudius was the worst.
He stalked along the Forum like King Tarquin in his pride:
Twelve axes waited on him, six marching on a side;
The townsmen shrank to right and left, and eyed askance with fear
His lowering brow, his curling mouth which always seemed to sneer
That brow of hate, that mouth of scorn, marks all the kindred still;
For never was there Claudius yet but wished the Commons ill:

Nor lacks he fit attendance; for close behind his heels,
With outstretched chin and crouching pace, the client Marcus steals,
His loins girt up to run with speed, be the errand what it may,
And the smile flickering on his cheek, for aught his lord may say.
Such varlets pimp and jest for hire among the lying Greeks:
Such varlets still are paid to hoot when brave Licinius speaks.
Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd;
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;
Where'e down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye see;
And wheresoe'r such lord is found, such client still will be.

Just then, as though one cloudless chink in a black stormy sky
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a fair young girl came by.
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Home she went bounding from the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm;
And past those dreaded axes she innocently ran,
With bright, frank brow that had not learned to blush at gaze of man;
And up the Sacred Street she turned, and as she danced along,
She warbled gayly to herself lines of the old old song,
How for a sport the princes came sparring from the camp,
And found Lucrece, combing the fleece, under the midnight lamp.
The maiden sang as sings the lark, when up he darts his flight,
From his nest in the green April corn, to meet the morning light;
And Appius heard her sweet young voice, and saw her sweet young face,
And loved her with the accursed love of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum, and up the Sacred Street,
His vulture eye pursued the trip of those small glancing feet.

* * * * * * * *

Over the Alban mountains the light of morning broke;
From all the roofs of the Seven Hills curled the thin wreaths of smoke:
The city gates were opened: the Forum, all alive,
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive.
Blithely on brass and timber the craftsman's stroke was ringing,
And blithely o'er her panniers the market-girl was singing,
And blithely young Virginia came smiling from her home:
Ah! wo for young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome!
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm.
She crossed the Forum shining with stalls in alleys gay,
And just had reached the very spot whereon I stand this day,
When up the varlet Marcus came; not such as when erewhile
He crouched behind his patron's heels with the true client smile:
He came with lowering forehead, swollen features, and clenched fist
And strode across Virginia's path, and caught her by the wrist.
Hard strove the frighted maiden, and screamed with look aghast;
And at her scream from right and left the folk came running fast;
The money-changer Crispus, with his thin silver hairs,
And Hanno from the stately booth glittering with Punic wares,
And the strong smith Muræna, grasping a half-forged brand,

And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in his hand.
All came in wrath and wonder: for all knew that fair child;
And, as she passed them twice a day, all kissed their hands and smiled
And the strong smith Muræna gave Marcus such a blow,
The caitiff reeled three paces back, and let the maiden go.
Yet glared he fiercely round him, and growled in harsh, fell tone,
"She's mine, and I will have her. I seek but for mine own:
She is my slave, born in my house, and stolen away and sold
The year of the sore sickness, ere she was twelve hours old.
'Twas in the sad September, the month of wail and fright,
Two augurs were borne forth that morn; the Consul died ere night.
I wait on Appius Claudius; I waited on his sire:
Let him who works the client wrong, beware the patron's ire."

So spake the varlet Marcus: and dread and silence came
On all the people at the sound of the great Claudian name.
For then there was no Tribune to speak the word of might,
Which makes the rich man tremble, and guards the poor man's right.
There was no brave Licinius, no honest Sextius then;
But all the city, in great fear, obeyed the wicked Ten.
Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muræna's skirt, and sobbed, and shrieked for aid.
Forth through the throng of gazers the young Icilius pressed,
And stamped his foot, and rent his gown, and smote upon his breast,
And sprang upon that column, by many a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets, three rustling swords are hung,
And beckoned to the people, and in bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning words which tyrants quake to hear.

"Now, by your children's cradles, now, by your father's graves,
Be men to-day, Quirites, or be for ever slaves!
For this did Servius give us laws? For this did Lucrece bleed?
For this was the great vengeance done on Tarquin's evil seed?
For this did those false sons make red the axes of their sire?
For this did Scævola's right hand hiss in the Tuscan fire?
Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race that stormed the lion's den?
Shall we, who could not brook one lord, crouch to the wicked Ten?
Oh for that ancient spirit, which curbed the Senate's will!
Oh for the tents which in old time whitened the Sacred Hill!
In those brave days our fathers stood firmly side by side;
They faced the Marcian fury; they tamed the Fabian pride;
They drove the fiercest Quinctius an outcast forth from Rome;
They sent the haughtiest Claudius with shivered fasces home.
But what their care bequeathed us our madness flung away:
All the ripe fruit of threescore years was blighted in a day.
Exult, ye proud Patricians! The hard-fought fight is o'er.
We strove for honors—'twas in vain: for freedom—'tis no more.
No crier to the polling, summons the eager throng;
No Tribune breathes the word of might that guards the weak from wrong.
Our very hearts, that were so high, sink down beneath your will.
Riches, and lands, and power, and state—ye have them:—keep them still.
Still keep the holy fillets; still keep the purple gown,

The axes, and the curule chair, the car, and laurel crown:
Still press us for your cohorts, and, when the fight is done,
Still fill your garners from the soil which our good swords have won.
Still, like a spreading ulcer which leech-craft may not cure,
Let your foul usance eat away the substance of the poor.
Still let your haggard debtors bear all their fathers bore;
Still let your dens of torment be noisome as of yore;
No fire when Tiber freezes; no air in dog-star heat;
And store of rods for freeborn backs, and holes for freeborn feet.
Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate;
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.
But, by the Shades beneath us, and by the Gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love!
Have ye not graceful ladies, whose spotless lineage springs
From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and ancient Alban kings?
Ladies who deign not on our paths to set their tender feet,
Who from their cars look down with scorn upon the wondering street?
Who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold,
And breathe of Capuan odors, and shine with Spanish gold?
Then leave the poor Plebeian his single tie to life—
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vexed soul endures,
The kiss, in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.
Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with pride;
Still let the bridegroom's arms enfold an unpolluted bride.
Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's blood to flame.
Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare."

* * * * * * * * * *

Straightway Virginius led the maid a little space aside,
To where the reeking shamble stood, piled up with horn and hide
Close to yon low dark archway, where, in a crimson flood,
Leaps down to the great sewer the gurgling stream of blood.
Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid his whittle down:
Virginius caught the whittle up, and hid it in his gown.
And then his eyes grew very dim, and his throat began to swell,
And in a hoarse, changed voice he spake, "Farewell, sweet child! Farewell!
Oh! how I loved my darling! Though stern I sometimes be,
To thee, thou know'st, I was not so. Who could be so to thee?
And how my darling loved me! How glad she was to hear
My footsteps on the threshold when I came back last year!
And how she danced with pleasure to see my civic crown,
And took my sword, and hung it up, and brought me forth my gown!
Now, all those things are over—yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays;
And none will grieve when I go forth, or smile when I return,
Or watch beside the old man's bed, or weep upon his urn.
The house that was the happiest within the Roman walls,
The house that envied not the wealth of Capua's marble halls,
Now, for the brightness of thy smile, must have eternal gloom,
And for the music of thy voice, the silence of the tomb.

The time is come. See how he points his eager hand this way!
See how his eyes gloat on thy grief, like a kite's upon the prey!
With all his wit, he little deems that, spurned, betrayed, bereft,
Thy father hath in his despair one fearful refuge left.
He little deems that in this hand I clutch what still can save
Thy gentle youth from taunts and blows, the portion of the slave;
Yea, and from nameless evil, that passeth taunt and blow—
Foul outrage which thou know'st not, which thou shalt never know.
Then clasp me round the neck once more, and give me one more kiss;
And, now, my own dear little girl, there is no way but this."
With that he lifted high the steel, and smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth, and with one sob she died.

Then, for a little moment, all people held their breath;
And through the crowded Forum was stillness as of death;
And in another moment brake forth from one and all
A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall.
Some with averted faces shrieking fled home amain;
Some ran to call a leech; and some ran to lift the slain:
Some felt her lips and little wrist, if life might there be found;
And some tore up their garments fast, and strove to staunch the wound.
In vain they ran, and felt, and stanched; for never truer blow
That good right arm had dealt in fight against a Volscian foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that deed, he shuddered and sank down,
And hid his face some little space with the corner of his gown,
Till, with white lips and bloodshot eyes, Virginius tottered nigh,
And stood before the judgment-seat, and held the knife on high.
"Oh! dwellers in the nether gloom, avengers of the slain,
By this dear blood I cry to you, do right between us twain;
And even as Appius Claudius hath dwelt by me and mine,
Deal you by Appius Claudius and all the Claudian line!"
So spake the slayer of his child, and turned, and went his way;
But first he cast one haggard glance to where the body lay,
And writhed, and groaned a fearful groan; and then, with steadfast feet
Strode right across the market-place unto the Sacred Street.

Then up sprang Appius Claudius: "Stop him; alive or dead!
Ten thousand pounds of copper to the man who brings his head."
He looked upon his clients, but none would work his will.
He looked upon his lictors, but they trembled and stood still.
And, as Virginius through the press his way in silence cleft,
Ever the mighty multitude fell back to right and left.
And he hath passed in safety unto his woful home,
And there ta'en horse to tell the camp what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen from every side,
And streets and porches round were filled with that o'erflowing tide;
And close around the body gathered a little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain.
They brought a bier and hung it with many a cypress crown,
And gently they uplifted her, and gently laid her down.
The face of Appius Claudius wore the Claudian scowl and sneer,

And in the Claudian note he cried, "What doth this rabble here?
Have they no crafts to mind at home, that hitherward they stray?
Ho! lictors, clear the market-place and fetch the corpse away!"
Till then the voice of pity and fury was not loud,
But a deep sullen murmur wandered among the crowd,
Like the moaning noise that goes before the whirlwind on the deep,
Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but half-aroused from sleep.
But when the lictors at that word, tall yeomen all and strong,
Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs, went down into the throng,
Those old men say who saw that day of sorrow and of sin,
That in the Roman Forum was never such a din.
The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls of grief and hate,
Were heard beyond the Pincian hill, beyond the Latin gate.
But close around the body where stood the little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain,
No cries were there, but teeth set fast, low whispers, and black frowns,
And breaking up of benches, and girding up of gowns.
'Twas well the lictors might not pierce to where the maiden lay,
Else surely had they been all twelve torn limb from limb that day.
Right glad they were to struggle back, blood streaming from their heads,
With axes all in splinters and raiment all in shreds.
Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip, and the blood left his cheek;
And thrice he beckoned with his hand, and thrice he strove to speak;
And thrice the tossing Forum sent out a frightful yell—
"See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done; and hide thy shame in hell!
Thou that wouldst make our maidens slaves, must first make slaves of men.
Tribunes!—Hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked Ten!"
And straightway, thick as hailstones, came whizzing through the air
Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all round the curule chair:
And upon Appius Claudius great fear and trembling came;
For never was a Claudius yet brave against aught but shame.
Though the great houses love us not, we own, to do them right,
That the great houses, all save one, have borne them well in fight
Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs and his wrongs,
His vengeance and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.
Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan bowed;
And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is proud.
But evermore a Claudius shrinks from a stricken field,
And changes color like a maid at sight of sword and shield.
The Claudian triumphs all were won within the City-towers;
The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but ours.
A Cossus, like a wild cat, springs ever at the face;
A Fabius rushes like a boar against the shouting chase;
But the vile Claudian litter, raging with currish spite,
Still yelps and snaps at those who run, still runs from those who smite.
So now 'twas seen of Appius. When stones began to fly,
He shook, and crouched, and wrung his hands, and smote upon his thigh.
"Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by me in this fray!
Must I be torn to pieces? Home, home the nearest way!"

While yet he spake and looked around with a bewildered stare,
Four sturdy lictors put their necks beneath the curule chair;
And fourscore clients on the left, and fourscore on the right,
Arrayed themselves with swords and staves, and loins girt up for fight.
But, though without or staff or sword, so furious was the throng,
That scarce the train with might and main could bring their lord along.
Twelve times the crowd made at him; five times they seized his gown;
Small chance was his to rise again, if once they got him down:
And sharper came the pelting; and evermore the yell—
"Tribunes! we will have Tribunes!"—rose with a louder swell:
And the chair tossed as tosses a bark with tattered sail,
When raves the Adriatic beneath an eastern gale,
When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost in clouds of spume,
And the great Thunder-Cape has donned his veil of inky gloom.
One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and one beneath the ear;
And ere he reached Mount Palatine, h swooned with pain and fear.
His cursed head, that he was wont to hold so high with pride,
Now, like a drunken man's, hung down, and swayed from side to side;
And when his stout retainers had brought him to his door,
His face and neck were all one cake of filth and clotted gore.
As Appius Claudius was that day, so may his grandson be!
God send Rome one such other sight, and send me there to see!

* * * * * *

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that, according to the popular tradition, Romulus, after he had slain his granduncle Amulius, and restored his grandfather Numitor, determined to quit Alba, the hereditary domain of the Sylvian princes, and to found a new city. The gods, it was added, vouchsafed the clearest signs of the favor with which they regarded the enterprise, and of the high destinies reserved for the young colony.

This event was likely to be a favorite theme of the old Latin minstrels. They would naturally attribute the project of Romulus to some divine intimation of the power and prosperity which it was decreed that his city should attain. They would probably introduce seers foretelling the victories

of unborn Consuls and Dictators, and the last great victory would generally occupy the most conspicuous place in the prediction. There is nothing strange in the supposition that the poet who was employed to celebrate the first great triumph of the Romans over the Greeks might throw his song of exultation into this form.

The occasion was one likely to excite the strongest feelings of national pride. A great outrage had been followed by a great retribution. Seven years before this time, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who sprang from one of the noblest houses of Rome, and had been thrice Consul, was sent ambassador to Tarentum, with charge to demand reparation for grievous injuries. The Tarentines gave him audience in their theatre, where he addressed them in such Greek as he could command, which, we may well believe, was not exactly such as Cineas would have spoken. An exquisite sense of the ridiculous belonged to the Greek character; and closely connected with this faculty was a strong propensity to flippancy and impertinence. When Posthumius placed an accent wrong, his hearers burst into a laugh. When he remonstrated, they hooted him, and called him barbarian; and at length hissed him off the stage as if he had been a bad actor. As the grave Roman retired, a buffoon, who, from his constant drunkenness, was nicknamed the Pintpot, came up with gestures of the grossest indecency, and bespattered the Senatorial gown with filth. Posthumius turned round to the multitude and held up the gown, as if appealing to the universal law of nations. The sight only increased the insolence of the Tarentines. They clapped their hands, and set up a shout of laughter which shook the theatre. "Men of Tarentum," said Posthumius, "it will take not a little blood to wash this gown."*

Rome, in consequence of this insult, declared war against the Tarentines. The Tarentines sought for allies beyond the Ionian sea. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, came to their help with a large army; and, for the first time, the two great nations of antiquity were fairly matched against each other.

The fame of Greece in arms, as well as in arts, was then at the height. Half a century earlier, the career of Alexander had excited the admiration and terror of all nations from the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules. Royal houses, founded by Macedonian captains, still reigned at Antioch

* Dion. Hal. De Legationibus.

and Alexandria. That barbarian warriors, led by barbarian chiefs, should win a pitched battle against Greek valor guided by Greek science, seemed as incredible as it would now seem that the Burmese or the Siamese should, in the open plain, put to flight an equal number of the best English troops. The Tarentines were convinced that their countrymen were irresistible in war; and this conviction had emboldened them to treat with the grossest indignity one whom they regarded as the representative of an inferior race. Of the Greek generals then living, Pyrrhus was indisputably the first. Among the troops who were trained in the Greek discipline, his Epirotes ranked high. His expedition to Italy was a turning-point in the history of the world. He found there a people who, far inferior to the Athenians and Corinthians in the fine arts, in the speculative sciences, and in all the refinements of life, were the best soldiers on the face of the earth. Their arms, their gradations of rank, their order of battle, their method of intrenchment, were all of Latin origin, and had all been gradually brought near to perfection, not by the study of foreign models, but by the genius and experience of many generations of great native commanders. The first words which broke from the king, when his practised eye had surveyed the Roman encampment, were full of meaning:—"These barbarians," he said, "have nothing barbarous in their military arrangements." He was at first victorious; for his own talents were superior to those of the captains who were opposed to him, and the Romans were not prepared for the onset of the elephants of the East, which were then for the first time seen in Italy—moving mountains, with long snakes for hands.* But the victories of the Epirotes were fiercely disputed, dearly purchased, and altogether unprofitable. At length Manius Curius Dentatus, who had in his first consulship won two triumphs, was again placed at the head of the Roman Commonwealth, and sent to encounter the invaders. A great battle was fought near Beneventum. Pyrrhus was completely defeated. He repassed the sea; and the world learned with amazement that a people had been discovered who, in fair fighting, were superior to the best troops that had been drilled on the system of Parmenio and Antigonus.

The conquerors had a good right to exult in their success,

* *Anguimanus* is the old Latin epithet for elephant.—Lucretius, ii. 538, v. 1302.

for their glory was all their own. They had not learned from their enemy how to conquer him. It was with their own national arms, and in their own national battle-array, that they had overcome weapons and tactics long believed to be invincible. The pilum and the broadsword had vanquished the Macedonian spear. The legion had broken the Macedonian phalanx. Even the elephants, when the surprise produced by their first appearance was over, could cause no disorder in the steady yet flexible battalions of Rome.

It is said by Florus, and may easily be believed, that the triumph far surpassed in magnificence any that Rome had previously seen. The only spoils which Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus could exhibit were flocks and herds, wagons of rude structure, and heaps of spears and helmets. But now, for the first time, the riches of Asia and the arts of Greece adorned a Roman pageant. Plate, fine stuffs, costly furniture, rare animals, exquisite paintings, and sculptures, formed part of the procession. At the banquet would be assembled a crowd of warriors and statesmen, among whom Manius Curius Dentatus would take the highest room. Caius Fabricius Luscinus, then, after two consulships and two triumphs, Censor of the Commonwealth, would doubtless occupy a place of honor at the board. In situations less conspicuous probably lay some of those who were, a few years later, the terror of Carthage; Caius Duilius, the founder of the maritime greatness of his country; Marcus Atilius Regulus, who owed to defeat a renown far higher than that which he had derived from his victories; and Caius Lutatius Catulus, who, while suffering from a grievous wound, fought the great battle of the Ægates, and brought the first Punic War to a triumphant close. It is impossible to recapitulate the names of these eminent citizens without reflecting that they were all, without exception, Plebeians, and would, but for the ever memorable struggle maintained by Caius Lucinius and Lucius Sextius, have been doomed to hide in obscurity, or to waste in civil broils, the capacity and energy which prevailed against Pyrrhus and Hamilcar.

On such a day we may suppose that the patriotic enthusiasm of a Latin poet would vent itself in reiterated shouts of *Io triumphe*, such as were uttered by Horace on a far less exciting occasion, and in boasts resembling those which Virgil, two hundred and fifty years later, put into the mouth of Anchises. The superiority of some foreign nations, and

especially of the Greeks, in the lazy arts of peace would be admitted with disdainful candor; but pre-eminence in all the qualities which fit a people to subdue and govern mankind would be claimed for the Romans.

The following lay belongs to the latest age of the Latin ballad-poetry. Nævius and Livius Andronicus were probably among the children whose mothers held them up to see the chariot of Curius go by. The minstrel who sang on that day might possibly have lived to read the first hexameters of Ennius, and to see the first comedies of Plautus. His poem, as might be expected, shows a much wider acquaintance with the geography, manners, and productions of remote nations, than would have been found in compositions of the age of Camillus. But he troubles himself little about dates; and having heard travellers talk with admiration of the Colossus of Rhodes, and of the structures and gardens with which the Macedonian kings of Syria had embellished their residence on the banks of the Orontes, he has never thought of enquiring whether these things existed in the age of Romulus.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE CAPITOL, ON THE DAY WHEN MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A SECOND TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED OVER KING PYRRHUS AND THE TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLXXIX.

1.

Now slain is King Amulius,
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber,
The mother to the tomb."

2.

In Alba's Lake no fisher
His net to-day is flinging:
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
To-day no axe is ringing:
The yoke hangs o'er the manger:
The scythe lies in the hay:
Through all the Alban villages
No work is done to-day.

3.

And every Alban burgher
Hath donned his whitest gown;
And every head in Alba
Weareth a poplar crown;
And every Alban door-post
With boughs and flowers is gay;
For to-day the dead are living;
The lost are found to-day.

4.

They were doomed by a bloody king:
They were doomed by a lying priest:
They were cast on the raging flood:
They were tracked by the raging beast.
Raging beast and raging flood
Alike have spared the prey;
And to-day the dead are living,
The lost are found to-day.

5.

The troubled river knew them,
And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle
That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore.
Twenty winters, twenty springs,
Since then have rolled away;
And to-day the dead are living,
The lost are found to-day.

6.

Blithe it was to see the twins,
Right goodly youths and tall,
Marching from Alba Longa
To their old grandsire's hall,
Along their path fresh garlands
Are hung from tree to tree:
Before them stride the pipers,
Piping a note of glee.

7.

On the right goes Romulus,
With arms to the elbows red,
And in his hand a broadsword,
And on the blade a head—
A head in an iron helmet,
With horse hair hanging down,
A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
Fixed in a ghastly frown—
The head of King Amulius
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.

8.

On the left side goes Remus,
With wrists and fingers red,
And in his hand a boar-spear,
And on the point a head—
A wrinkled head and aged,
With silver beard and hair,
And holy fillets round it,
Such as the pontiffs wear—
The head of ancient Camers,
Who spoke the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber:
The mother to the tomb."

9.

Two and two behind the twins
Their trusty comrades go,
Four-and-twenty valiant men,
With club, and axe, and bow.
On each side every hamlet
Pours forth its joyous crowd,
Shouting lads, and baying dogs,
And children laughing loud,
And old men weeping fondly
As Rhea's boys go by,
And maids who shriek to see the heads,
Yet shrieking, press more nigh.

10.

So they marched along the lake;
They marched by fold and stall,
By corn-field and by vineyard,
Unto the old man's hall.

11.

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
Capys, the sightless seer;
From head to foot he trembled
As Romulus drew near.

And up stood stiff his thin white hair.
And his blind eyes flashed fire:
"Hail! foster child of the wondrous nurse!
Hail! son of the wondrous sire!

12.

"But thou—what dost thou here
In the old man's peaceful hall?
What doth the eagle in the coop,
The bison in the stall?
Our corn fills many a garner;
Our vines clasp many a tree;
Our flocks are white on many a hill;
But these are not for thee.

13.

"For thee no treasure ripens
In the Tartessian mine;
For thee no ship brings precious bales
Across the Lybian brine:
Thou shalt not drink from amber;
Thou shalt not rest on down;
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

14.

"Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man's seed are born,
Whom woman's milk hath fed.
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest;
Thou that art sprung from the War-god's loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf's breast.

15.

"From sunrise until sunset
All earth shall hear thy fame:
A glorious city thou shalt build,
And name it by thy name.
And there, unquenched through ages,
Like Vesta's sacred fire,
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
The spirit of thy sire.

16.

"The ox toils through the furrow,
Obedient to the goad;
The patient ass, up flinty paths,
Plods with his weary load:
With whine and bound the spaniel
His master's whistle hears;

and the sheep yields her patiently
To the loud clashing shears.

"But thy nurse will bear no master,
Thy nurse will bear no load;
And wo to them that shear her,
And wo to them that goad!
When all the pack, loud baying,
Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence, biting hard,
Amidst the dying hounds.

18.

"Pomona loves the orchard;
And Liber loves the vine;
And Pales loves the straw-built shed
Warm with the breath of kine;
And Venus loves the whispers
Of plighted youth and maid,
In April's ivory moonlight
Beneath the chestnut shade.

19.

"But thy father loves the clashing
Of broadsword and of shield:
He loves to drink the stream that reeks
From the fresh battle-field:
He smiles a smile more dreadful
Than his own dreadful frown,
When he sees the thick black cloud of smoke
Go up from the conquered town.

20.

"And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,
And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
His baths and his perfumes;
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
Their dyeing-vats and looms;
Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar:
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs
And scrolls of wordy lore.

21.

"Thine, Roman, is the pilum:
Roman, the sword is thine,
The even trench, the bristling mound,
The legion's ordered line;

And thine the wheels of triumph,
Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
To Jove's eternal fane.

22.

"Beneath thy yoke the Volscian
Shall veil his lofty brow:
Soft Capua's curled revellers
Before thy chair shall bow:
The Lucumoes of Arnus
Shall quake thy rods to see:
And the proud Samnite's heart of steel
Shall yield to only thee.

23.

"The Gaul shall come against thee
From the land of snow and night;
Thou shalt give his fair haired armies
To the raven and the kite.

24.

"The Greek shall come against thee
The conquerer of the East.
Beside him stalks to battle
The huge earth-shaking beast,
The beast on whom the castle
With all its guards doth stand,
The beast who hath between his eyes
The serpent for a hand.
First march the bold Epirotes,
Wedged close with shield and spear,
And the ranks of false Tarentum
Are glittering in the rear.

25.

"The ranks of false Tarentum
Like hunted sheep shall fly:
In vain the bold Epirotes
Shall round their standards die:
And Apennine's gray vultures
Shall have a noble feast
On the fat and on the eyes
Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

26.

"Hurrah! for the good weapons
That keep the War-god's land.
Hurrah! for Rome's stout pilum
In a stout Roman hand.
Hurrah! for Rome's short broadsword,
That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
Hews deep its gory way.

27.

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the wan captives
That pass in endless file.
Ho! bold Epirotes, whither
Hath the Red Knight ta'en flight?
Ho! dogs of false Tarentum,
Is not the gown washed white?

28.

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the rich dye of Tyre,
And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage
Torn from the pheasant's wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
That shone on Indian kings,
The urns of massy silver,
The goblets rough with gold,
The many-colored tablets bright
With loves and wars of old,
The stone that breathes and struggles,
The brass that seems to speak;—
Such cunning they who dwell on high
Have given unto the Greek.

29.

"Hurrah! for Manius Curius,
The bravest son of Rome,
Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
Thrice drawn in triumph home.
Weave, weave, for Manius Curius
The third embroidered gown:
Make ready the third lofty car,
And twine the third green crown;
And yoke the steeds of Rosea
With necks like a bended bow;
And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
The bull as white as snow.

30.

"Blest and thrice blest the Roman
Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees that long victorious pomp
Wind down the Sacred Way,
And through the bellowing Forum,
And round the Suppliant's Grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
Of Captolian Jove.

31.

"Then where, o'er two bright havens
The towers of Corinth frown;
Where the gigantic King of day
On his own Rhodes looks down;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
Beneath the laurel shades;
Where Nile reflects the endless length
Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
Of Byrsa's thousand masts;
Where fur-clad hunters wander
Amidst the Northern ice;
Where through the sand of morning-land
The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
Far o'er the Western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
The mighty name of Rome."

THE END

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